IF "A YOUNG GOOSE" MEANS "GOSLING," WHAT DOES "TO CONSUME BY FIRE" MEAN? See page 360.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 507. FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 17TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

DR TIBBLES' Vi-Cocoa

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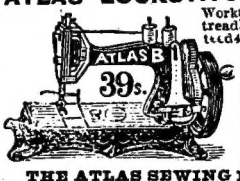

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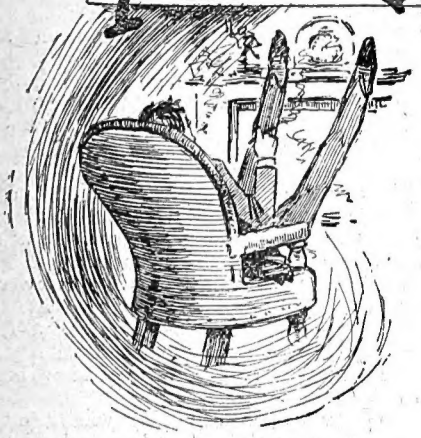
SHORT STORIES

No. 507.] For the Week ending September 17th, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

HOMESPUN YARNS



No. 1.

TRIED IN THE FIRE.

By Levin Carnac.

WHEN I was a lad, like a good many lads with a strong taste for the literature of adventure, I made up my mind to go to sea. I went—and liked my first taste of ship-life so little that I ran away at the first port we touched at.

This was Williamstown, one of the ports of Melbourne, on the opposite side of Hobson's Bay from Sandridge, and thence I made my way with all speed I might and the fear of the policeman behind me, up the Bush by way of Kilmore and the Pyalong ranges.

It was a good twelve months before I saw Melbourne again. During that year of rambling and wild living I picked up the materials of more than one striking story of real life, and that which follows here is reconstructed from the elements gathered from one of the companions of my wanderings with swag and billy over the bush-tracks in search of work and change of scene.

My friend was an educated man and an accomplished, if penitent, scoundrel by his own showing, and it is the story of his reformation that I am going to tell as nearly as I can put it into the form in which I had it from him one splendid moonlight night over the camp fire:

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"I call myself an honest man now, and I am as honest as a good many respectable sharps who wouldn't shake hands with me in public for £5 unless it was at a philanthropy show, but a few years ago—never mind how many—I was as tough-laid a scoundrel as a policeman could wish to catch between Bombay and Ballarat. I was a sort of gentleman thief and swell cracksman, with a turn for anything, from housebreaking to forgery.

"Tom Markham was a clerk and cashier in a shipping firm in Melbourne that owned a line of small vessels trading to the South Seas, and, not to make the most disagreeable part of my story too long for my taste or yours, I managed to steal and realise some securities belonging to these people in such a way that I got off scot clear, while poor Tom got seven years for not doing it?

"What complicated the matter a good deal was the

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We shot down all but two of the mutineers.

fact that Tom and I were both in love with the same girl, and it happened rather curiously that a year or so after Tom was sent up I was able to put her father under a very considerable obligation to me with part of the proceeds of the very robbery for which he was innocently suffering.

"I always thought that Lucy liked Tom a good deal more than suited my plans; but, of course, with the stain of felony on his name, marriage with him was not to be thought of, and so the field was left open to me.

"By this time I had got together quite a respectable pile by the exercise of talents on an extremely productive field, and was getting anxious to marry and settle down quietly and honestly for the rest of my natural days. Lucy's father was a civil engineer, and one day, by some stroke of good luck, he got a very fair appointment at the Cape that was advertised in the *Argus*.

"I had no particular wish to be in Australia when poor Tom came out, and I thought I might as well make a move then as later on; so when the old man found a little difficulty in getting together the passage-money for himself and daughter, I opened my heart to him and said that if his daughter would marry me I would go with them to the Cape and settle down there. Under these circumstances I could very well offer to advance him what he wanted to make up the passage-money.

"Lucy herself at last formally accepted me as her lover, but by some great good fortune for her, she refused to marry me until her father was settled at the Cape.

"We took passage in a crack three-masted schooner that had been in the tea trade and was then running with light cargo and passengers between Port Phillip and Cape Town.

"One lovely night after we had doubled Cape Leeuin I went down on to the main deck when the other passengers had turned in, and after taking a few turns up and down, I leant my arms on the bulwarks and stood looking out over the moonlit sea and back upon the life I hoped I had left for ever. I had done very well, on the whole. I felt no compunction for my thefts and swindles, for after all they were no worse in reality than the legal rogueries that are practised every day by the swindlers who are clever enough to keep on the right side of the line between sharp practice and crime; but there was just one that troubled what remained of conscience I possessed very sorely, and that was the way that I had blasted poor Tom Markham's life, and taken from him the sweetheart who was going to marry me when we reached Cape Town.

"So strongly had this regret got possession of me that for once I lost my almost perfect self-control, and said aloud:

"'Poor old Tom, I wish to Heaven it could have been done otherwise!'

"Hardly were the words out of my lips when I felt a hand on my shoulder, and heard Tom's voice whisper in my ear:

"'Yes, Fitzgerald, you may well say that. You have stolen more than money or securities from me. No—you needn't start and turn white. I'm not going to expose you or make any fuss about what can't be mended now. If I wanted to I couldn't, for your word would be a good deal better than mine, seeing you are a cabin passenger and I am only a green hand hired for the trip, and a runaway convict into the bargain. I've watched you ever since we left the Heads to see if you'd recognise me, and as you haven't done so I think I must be fairly safe.'

"By the time he had done speaking I had recovered from the shock of the unexpected meeting, and, so, putting out my hand to him I said:

"'Tom! if you can forgive the dirty trick I played you, say so and shake hands, and when we get to the Cape I'll whack up everything I possess with you, equal shares, and you shall start fresh in life as well as me.'

"'That's a fair offer, Fitz,' said Tom taking my hand, 'it's as much as you could be expected to do, and on

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that basis we'll make it up. My notions of what they call honesty have changed a good bit since I graduated on to the Government works, and I see now that you must have either done what you did or gone to p.s. yourself—and for you it might have been a lifer if anything else had come out. It's rather rough, though, about Lucy. I love her just as much as ever I did, and I'd lay my life down willingly to please or serve her—and—and that's why I'm going to stand aside, Fitz, and let you walk over for her. I'm not fit for her now. My nature's poisoned and brutalised, and I'm—well, I'm just the outcast that you've made me, and that I'll have to remain, so you can have her and I'll stand aside.

"'But mind this, Fitz' (and here his voice grew hard and he gripped my arm like a vice), "if *you* don't prove worthy of her, as sure as there's a Heaven above us I'll find you out and revenge myself and her with——'

"The rest of the threat was never uttered, for, as he spoke, a whiff of blue smoke rose from the open forehatch, followed by a denser cloud, and the next instant the dreadful cry of 'Fire' was ringing from stem to stern of the ship.

"What followed I remember only as a wild dream of frantic, hopeless struggles to subdue the flames, of closing the hatches and pumping tons of water down into the hold, and hearing the fierce roar of the struggle between the flames and the water in the furnace that was raging just below the cracking, steaming deck on which we stood. At last the imprisoned steam burst up a portion of the deck, and then all was over except taking to the boats as fast as we could.

"Unhappily for us all we had no regular crew, for good sailors were very scarce in Melbourne in those days, and our forecastle was full of a lot of riff-raff from half the countries of Europe. Of course they broke loose as soon as they saw the game was up, and made a rush for the boats. As they did so I made for the poop on which Lucy and her father and the other passengers were standing waiting for the quarter-boat to be lowered. I dived down into my cabin, crammed a few things into my valise, stuck my revolvers into my coat pockets, and ran back on deck just in time to help to drive back half a dozen of the crew who were making for the davit-ropes.

"Close by Lucy, but standing with his back to her, I found Tom. He was only armed with a marline-spike, so I gave him one of my pistols, and we stood there side by side with the flames creeping nearer to us every moment, and the still moonlit water beneath us waiting to swallow up the doomed ship, fighting for the safety of the girl we both had wooed and I had so basely won.

"In the end we shot down all but two of the mutineers, and they made a run for the bulwarks, jumped over, and tried to swim to the long boat which the others had succeeded in launching. Their shipmates were in too much of a hurry to get away from the burning ship to stop for them, and they were pulled down by the sharks, as they deserved to be. Meanwhile, we had got the quarter-boat into the water and lowered the women and provisions and baggage into it.

"Before Tom or I had made a move to get into her she was overfull. One more might be squeezed into her, but it was perfectly plain that two would be fatal. Tom and I looked at each other for a moment and then at Lucy in the boat. In an instant all the good there was in both of us came out, and we each stepped back and said to the other: "Get in, old man, I'll stop."

"There was no time to argue, for the flames were upon us, so Tom, to settle the matter, took me by the shoulders and forced me over the side, saying, "You can make her happier than I can. Go and do so, and God be with you both."

"As he uttered the blessing he let go my shoulders, ran across the deck, pitched a hen-coop into the sea, and jumped overboard after it.

"Was he drowned? No; we kept him near the boat on his hen-coop all night, and the next day we had the good fortune to be picked up by a English clipper bound to Melbourne.

"I got back a changed man. That awful moment on the burning deck had scorched all the meanness right out of me. I saw what was the proper thing to do and I did it. I gave myself up to the police, cleared Tom completely, and went to do the remainder of his time instead of him. In consideration of my confession, and giving up a lot of the stolen property, I got off with five years. When I came out Tom and Lucy were married. They wanted me to go and stop with them for a bit, but I took to the bush instead, and I've been on the wander ever since, and shall be to the end of the chapter. Well, good-night, young fellow. I'm turning in now."

"Has Mantalius a very deep voice?"

"Very. When that man sings it hurts his corns."

Mistress: "Where have you been before?"

Servant: "Just give me a directory and I'll mark the places where I have not been."

Customer: "Is that the razor you shaved me with the last time?"

Knight of the Razor: "Yes, sir."

Customer: "Chloroform, please!"

"Man overboard!" cried the sailor, seeing a man fall into the sea.

"What do you mean with your 'Man overboard'?" gasped the unfortunate, bobbing up. "Baron Von Feiglestock is overboard!"

Jinks: "To-day I pleased a pretty woman by telling her that a certain red-faced, snub-nosed, bald-headed mortal looked like her."

Winks: "Get out!"

Jinks: "The red-faced, snub-nosed mortal was her first baby."

Magistrate: "For striking the plaintiff a punch on the nose I fine you forty shillings."

Culprit: "Forty shillings is a big thing with me, yer worship. Can't I pay it in instalments?"

Magistrate: "No; did you punch his nose in instalments?"

A: "Our postage system is, after all, shockingly unreliable. I intend to lodge a complaint with the authorities."

B: "Indeed! Do your letters often miscarry?"

A: "Yes; for instance, that five pound note you promised to send me a week ago hasn't yet arrived."

First Cyclist: "Do you see that gentleman yonder? He holds the greatest number of prizes and medals ever possessed by any one man."

Second Cyclist: "What! That fellow? He doesn't look a bit like a champion."

First Cyclist: "It's just as I tell you, though. He is a pawnbroker, you see."

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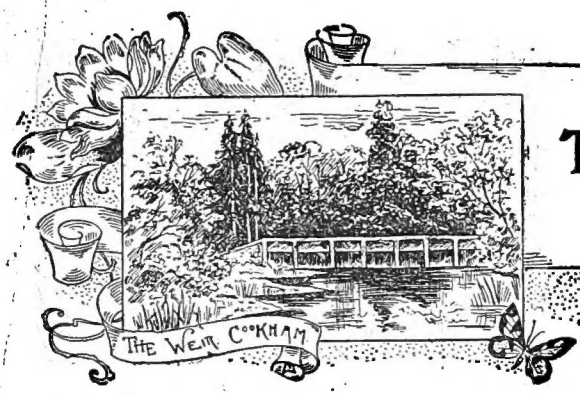

The Gambler's Ward.

SOME few years ago I went to stay with an eccentric French friend who lived in a quaint, old-fashioned house about ten miles from Paris.

He was a confirmed old bachelor, a student, an antiquarian, a collector of curios, and a deeply-read man, whose wealth had left him free to follow his natural bent, and who was dreaming away his life in the pursuit of various hobbies apart from his fellow-men, buried in the ashes of the past.

The day after my arrival we had just finished lunch, and he was explaining at great length the origin and use of a curious Etruscan vase, when my eyes, which, like my thoughts, were very disposed to wander, lighted upon an object that caused me to utter an exclamation of horror and amazement.

"What is the matter?" asked Julien de Noirville, coming back reluctantly to the present.

"Look!" I said quickly, pointing to a house that overlooked part of his garden.

At one of the upper French windows that opened on to a narrow stone ledge, not wide enough to be dignified by the name of a balcony, behind heavy iron bars, was the pale, agonised face of a girl, surrounded by long, fair hair, which fell in tangled masses on her emaciated shoulders. Her thin, claw-like hands were beating restlessly against the panes, and tears were rolling down her wasted cheeks. She was dressed in some kind of loose pink garment, that was both torn and dirty, and altogether she presented the most pitiable and dejected appearance.

"Oh, that's the lunatic!" said Julian indifferently.

"Who is she?" I asked.

"Ah, by-the-way, she is a countrywoman of yours!" he answered with more interest. "She's a Miss Grace Standish, and I have my doubts as to whether she is mad. Some weeks ago she jumped from that window into my garden and took refuge in the library. I found her there and she implored me not to send her back to prison, and told me a terrible story of the cruelty she was suffering from, that she was being done to death for the sake of her money, and all that sort of thing. Her friends traced her and insisted on her return to that house, telling me that she was a maniac, and of course, I had to let her go. Since then they have put those bars outside the window."

"But haven't you done anything to help her—to rescue her?" I asked impatiently.

"My dear Harry, you English are so fond of mixing yourselves up in other people's affairs! What could I do?

"Just imagine my plunging myself into the quicksands of litigation about an utter stranger, who may have been telling me some wild, hysterical delusions. Besides, I had just received a most valuable collection of Inca relics and had to tabulate them."

I turned away, disgusted at his selfish, inert conduct, and determined to find out more about the girl, who I felt sure was the victim of gross cruelty.

I prosecuted cautious inquiries and found that her story was only too true. Her father, Sir George Standish, had died when she was a baby, and her mother, a Frenchwoman, who survived her husband by a few years, left her own brother, Lucien de Longueville, as the child's sole guardian.

As Grace approached her majority his treatment of her became more and more unnatural, till, finding that his conduct towards his orphan niece was severely commented upon in England, he had removed her to France, shut her up in this gloomy house in the care of an old Frenchman and his wife, and had given out that her brain was hopelessly affected.

Starvation, solitude, and ill-treatment had already worked havoc upon both her mind and body, but the expression of her face was far from being that of an irresponsible maniac.

M. de Longueville had further strengthened his position by securing the assistance of an unscrupulous French doctor, who, in return for very handsome fees, gave certificates as to her mental condition which enabled her guardian to make free use of her money.

I determined to see her and hear something from her own lips, so I watched the house for days, and at last gathered that she was left alone for a short time in the middle of the day while the hard-featured old hag who was supposed to look after her, went down to have her own dinner.

I climbed up into a tree, whose friendly branches rendered me less conspicuous than if I had used a ladder, and, swinging myself on to a branch near the window, called gently:

"Miss Standish! Miss Grace! A friend wants you!"

She crept timidly to the window, only to start back again as soon as she caught sight of a strange face, but I beckoned kindly to her, and pointing to the window, said:

"Can you open it? I want to talk to you—to help you."

She managed to unfasten the hasp, but she was too weak to push the window open, so I placed my foot on the stone ledge and, while holding on with one hand, pulled at the barrier between us.

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"I am an Englishman, and I mean to get you out of this." I began.

"It's too late, too late," she moaned. "I heard them say this morning that I hadn't long to live, and I thank God for it. I can endure no more, I begged them to put me out of my misery months ago, and then they said I was dangerous and tied my hands and feet to a chair. See!" she said, holding out her wasted arms, upon which were thick red seams, "that's where the ropes cut me."

"The brutes," I muttered; "but you must be brave; it is not too late, only you must look out for me and try to tell me everything that will help me to save you. First of all who is the doctor that comes to see you?"

"Ah, how good you are!" she said, the tears filling her large, sorrowful eyes. "But I dare not hope, they will never let me out. They say I am mad, and I think they will soon make me so. Dr. Gabriel is the one who comes. A little dark man with cruel eyes and fat white hands."

Her voice had sunk into a low whisper, and I could see she was trembling violently from the excitement, so I judged it wiser to leave for that day before we should be surprised or she should be unable to conceal the fact of my visit. I shut the window after a few more encouraging words, and promised to come again soon.

She smiled sadly with infinite gratitude and pathos, and stood watching my descent with hungry eyes. Friends and kindness seemed unknown quantities in her young life.

I told Julien de Noirville what I had done, and he patted my shoulder kindly, saying in a tone of apology:

"My solitary life makes me selfish, I'm afraid, but I'm very glad you've taken the matter up, and if you want money, come to me."

I paid a visit to the British Ambassador and found he was away. I then wrote to him, but from his answer I could see that M. de Longueville had made his own cause good with the authorities, and in the face of serious international complications the fate of a poor mentally afflicted girl was but a mere trifle.

I gained the ear of the French magistrate who knew something of de Longueville's character, and engaged Maître André, a clever counsel to conduct the case.

After various consultations I took advantage of de Longueville's absence in Monte Carlo to call upon Doctor Gabriel, whom I found in his luxurious rooms on the first floor of a large house in one of the best parts of Paris.

He read my card, and looking up repeated the name, "Captain Lorrimer," thoughtfully, then, with a polite bow, he said:

"Pardon! Monsieur le Capitaine! but I do not remember the name. You have come to consult me; it is not my hour, but I will make an exception."

"Yes: I came to consult you on a matter of vital importance," I interrupted brusquely, for his oily manner irritated me. "I am here to ask you about Miss Standish."

He started slightly, then, assuming an air of deep sympathy:

"Ah, *la pauvre demoiselle*! It is a sad, sad, cruel case!"

"You use the right word—*cruel*. It is deliberate murder, and you know it as well as I do. You know she is perfectly sane, or you know nothing about your profession, but you sell your honour and her life for the filthy lucre that keeps you here in luxury while she is being slowly done to death!"

"Sir! You insult me! You shall give me satisfaction! No gentleman could hear such words—" he stammered, choking with rage and waving the fat white hands of which Grace had spoken.

"We will settle that afterwards," I said coolly. "You must first sign this little document, which lets you off a great deal too easily."

I laid before him a parchment which had been drawn up by Maître André, and which ran as follows:

"I, Hector Gabriel, do hereby certify that Miss Grace Standish has fully regained the use of her faculties, and is perfectly competent to manage her own affairs."

"Never!" he cried, pushing it from him and beginning to pace up and down in an excited fashion. "Never! I will never sign such a thing. She is mad, hopelessly mad."

"We have only your word for it, and as you refuse to save yourself by this means, I shall apply for an order to enable the two first mental specialists in London and Paris to examine her. Then the whole profession will know of your complicity in the crime and," I said, moving a step nearer to him, "if the law does not punish you as you deserve, I'll hunt you down and shoot you myself, for you're not fit to live!"

He tried a little more bluster, but his cunning told him that the game was in my hands, so after a few more muttered imprecations he signed the paper. As I prepared to leave the room with my trump card in my pocket, he suddenly changed his tune and almost grovelled at my feet, imploring me not to expose him. He had been poor, the money tempted him, he had not consented to any cruelty, and he had tried to prevent violent measures.

I flung him off and went away to watch my opportunity of telling Grace of my unlooked-for success.

When M. de Longueville returned and found that his niece had been removed from the house in which he had left her, he was inclined to treat the matter with a high hand, and talked of taking proceedings, but when he was compelled to face Miss Standish in a court of law, his valour oozed out at the tips of his fingers, and a more abject coward it has never been my lot to see.

Grace told her story with a simple pathos and intelligence that went straight to all hearts. The prospect of release had already begun to tell favourably on her, and it was easy to see that a few months of freedom and happiness would make her blossom out into a beautiful girl.

Her uncle was ordered to make full restitution of all that he appropriated since she came of age, and give an account of the way he had administered the estate during her minority. Through his dishonesty and extravagance her fortune was found to have been considerably diminished, but as he was a bankrupt and a gambler there was no redress.

Grace had the sublime generosity to offer him a sum of money on condition that he would go to America and stop there; but before the news reached him he had taken a longer passage into the unknown, and the world was better for his absence.

No, I did not marry Grace Standish.

After a time I went to India, and although we corresponded as friends we neither entertained for the other that feeling which would justify our union. Three years later she wrote to tell me of her engagement to a young London journalist, and when I returned to England a few months afterwards I was invited to dine at the house of the newly-married couple

MARY FERMOR.

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A JURYMAN'S STORY.

WE had been out twenty-four hours, and stood eleven to one. The case was a very plain one—at least, we eleven thought so.

A murder of peculiar atrocity had been committed, and, though no eye had witnessed the deed, circumstances pointed to the prisoner's guilt with unfailing certainty. The recusant juror had stood out from the first. He acknowledged the cogency of the proofs, confessed his inability to reconcile the facts with the defendant's innocence, and yet on every vote went steadily for acquittal. His conduct was inexplicable. It could not result from a lack of intelligence, for, while he spoke but little, his words were well chosen, and evinced a thorough understanding of the case.

Though still in the prime of manhood, his locks were prematurely white, and his face wore a singularly sad and thoughtful expression. He might be one of those who entertained scruples as to the right of society to inflict the death penalty. But no, it was not that, for, in reply to such a suggestion, he frankly admitted that brutal men, like the violent brutes they resemble, must be controlled through fear, and that dread of death, the supreme terror, is, in many cases, the only adequate restraint.

At the prospect of another night of fruitless imprisonment we began to grow impatient, and expostulated warmly against what seemed an unreasonable captiousness; and some not over-kind remarks were indulged in as to the impropriety of trifling with an oath like that under which we were acting.

"And yet," the man answered, as though communicating with himself rather than repelling the imputation, "it is conscience that hinders my concurrence in a verdict not approved by my judgment."

"How can that be?" queried several at once.

"Conscience may not always dare to follow judgment."

"But here she can know no other guide."

"I once would have said the same."

"And what has changed your opinion?"

"Experience."

The speaker's manner was visibly agitated, and we awaited in silence the explanation which he seemed ready to give.

Mastering his emotion, as if to answer our looks of inquiry, he continued:

"Twenty years ago I was a young man just beginning life. Few had brighter prospects, and none brighter hopes. An attachment dating from childhood had ripened with its object. There had been no verbal declaration and acceptance of love—no formal plighting of troth; but when I took my departure to seek a home in the Western States of America, it was a thing understood that when I had found it and put it in order she was to share it.

"Life in the backwoods, though solitary, is not necessarily lonely. The kind of society afforded by Nature depends much on one's self. As for me, I lived more in the future than in the present, and hope was an ever-cheerful companion.

"At length the time came for making the final payment on the home which I had bought. It would henceforth be my own; and in a few months my simple dwelling, which I had spared no pains to render inviting, would be graced by its mistress.

"At the land office, which was some sixty miles off, I met my old friend George Chambers. He, too, had come to seek his fortune in America; and we were both delighted at the meeting. He had brought with him, he said, a sum of money which he desired to invest in land on which it was his purpose to settle.

"I expressed a strong wish to have him for a neighbour, and gave him a cordial invitation to accompany me home, giving it as my belief that he could nowhere make a better selection than in that vicinity. He readily

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consented, and we set out together. We had not ridden many miles when George suddenly recollected a commission he had undertaken from a friend, which would require his attendance at a public land-sale on the following day.

"Exacting a promise that he would not delay his visit longer than necessary, and having given minute directions as to the route, I continued my way homeward, while he turned back.

"I was about retiring to bed on the night of my return, when a summons from without called me to the door. A stranger asked shelter for himself and his horse for the night. I invited him in. Though a stranger, his face seemed familiar. He was probably one of the men I had seen at the land office, a place, at that time, much frequented. Offering him a seat, I went to see his horse. The poor animal, as well as I could see by the dim starlight, seemed to have been hardly used. His panting sides bore witness of merciless riding, and a tremulous shrinking, at the slightest touch, betokened recent fright.

"On re-entering the house, I found the stranger was not there. His absence excited no surprise; he would doubtless soon return. It was a little singular, however, that he should have left his watch lying upon the table.

"At the end of half an hour, my guest not returning, I went out again to the stable, thinking he might have found his way thither to give personal attention to the wants of his horse.

"Before going out, from mere force of habit—for we were as yet uninfested by either thieves or policemen—I took the precaution of putting the stranger's watch in a drawer in which I kept my own valuables. I found the horse as I had left him, and gave him the food which he was now sufficiently cooled to be allowed to eat, but his master was nowhere to be seen. As I approached the house, a crowd of men on horseback dashed up, and I was commanded in no gentle tones to 'stand.' In another moment I was in the clutches of those who claimed me as their 'prisoner.'

"I was too much stupefied at first to ask what it all meant. I did so at last, and the explanation came; it was terrible! My friend with whom I had so lately set out in company had been found murdered and robbed near the spot at which I, but I alone, knew we had separated. I was the last person known to be with him, and I was now arrested on suspicion of his murder.

"A search of the premises was immediately instituted. The watch was found in the drawer in which I had placed it, and was identified as the property of the murdered man. His horse, too, was found in the stable, for the animal I had just put there was none other. I recognised him myself when I saw him in the light.

"What I said, I know not. My confusion was taken as additional evidence of guilt. And when, at length, I did command language to give an intelligible statement, it was received with sneers of incredulity. The mob spirit is inherent in man—at least, in crowds of men. It may not always manifest itself in physical violence. It sometimes contents itself with lynching. But whatever its form, it is always relentless, pitiless, cruel. As the proofs of my guilt, one after another, came to light, low muttering gradually grew into a clamour for vengeance; and but for the firmness of one man—the officer who had me in charge—I should doubtless have paid the penalty of my supposed offence on the spot.

"It was not sympathy for me that actuated my protector. His heart was as hard as his office; but he represented the majesty of the law, and took a sort of grim pride in the position. As much under the glance of his eyes as before the muzzle of his pistol, the cowardly clamourers drew back. Perhaps they were not sufficiently numerous to feel the full effect of that mysterious reflex influence which makes a crowd of men so much worse, and at times so much better, than any one of them—singly.

* * * * *

"At the end of some months my trial came. It could have but one result. Circumstances too plainly declared my guilt. I alone knew they lied. The absence of the jury was very brief. To their verdict I paid but little heed. It was a single hideous word; but I had long anticipated it, and it made no impression.

"It may be hard for the condemned criminal to meet death; it is still harder for him who is innocent. The one, when the first shock is over, acquiesces in his doom, and gives himself to repentance; the heart of the other, filled with rebellion against man's injustice, can scarce bring itself to ask pardon of Heaven. I had gradually overcome this feeling, in spite of the good clergyman's irritating efforts, which were mainly directed towards extracting a confession, without which, he assured me, he had no hope to offer.

"On the morning of the day fixed for my execution, I felt measurably resigned. I had so long stood face to face with death, had so accustomed myself to look upon it as a merely momentary pang, that I looked forward to death as a relief. She for whom I had gone to prepare a home had already found one in Heaven. The tidings of my calamity had broken her heart. She alone of all the world had believed me innocent; and she had died with a prayer on her lips that the truth might yet be brought to light.

"All this I had heard, and it had soothed as with a sweet incense my troubled spirit. Death, however unwelcome the shape, was now a portal beyond which I could see one angel waiting to receive me. I heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and nerved myself to meet the expected summons. The door of my cell opened, and the sheriff and his attendants entered. He held in his hands a paper. It was doubtless my death-warrant. He began to read it. The words 'full and free pardon' were the first to strike my preoccupied senses. They affected the bystanders more than myself. Yet so it was; I was pardoned for an offence I had never committed.

"The real culprit, none other, it is needless to say, than he who sought and abused my hospitality, had been mortally wounded in a recent affray in a distant city, but had lived long enough to make a disclosure, which had been laid before the governor barely in time to save me from a shameful death, and condemn me to a cheerless and burdensome life.

"That is my experience. My judgment, as yours, in the case before us leads to but one conclusion, that of the prisoner's guilt; but not less confident and apparently unerring was the judgment that falsely pronounced my own."

We no longer importuned our fellow-juror, but patiently awaited our discharge on the ground of inability to agree, which came at last. The prisoner was tried and convicted at a subsequent term, and at the last moment confessed his crime on the scaffold.

Wilson Jackson.

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Football Players Competition!

OPEN TO EVERYBODY. **£10 IN PRIZES.** OPEN TO EVERYBODY.

Below will be found ten sets of words, each of which indicates the name of some well-known football player.

For example, "A young goose" signifies, of course, Gosling.

Ten names will appear each week for five weeks, making fifty names in all.

Keep all your lists by you until you are told to send them in.

To the person who succeeds in solving the greatest number we will give

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If you are weak in the names of football players, your brother, or cousin, or male friend will give you a helping hand.

SHORT STORIES "FOOTBALL PLAYERS" COUPON No. 2.

11. A pretty girl.	11. .....
12. In want of a pig's thigh.	12. .....
13. To consume by fire.	13. .....
14. Jenny Wren's nephew.	14. .....
15. A tribesman of India.	15. .....
16. To ward off.	16. .....
17. A swarm of little fish.	17. .....
18. Named a spring.	18. .....
19. Gritty countries.	19. .....
20. A fish and part of a lamp.	20. .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

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A LETTER'S EXPERIENCE.

I have existed but a few hours. I was born this morning on the red velvet lid of an ebony writing-desk. A woman wrote me into existence, and as I grew under a fine gold pen, I first perceived the tips of slender white fingers whose regular sway back and forth gave me a delicious sensation. Then I distinguished the face bent above me, a pretty face, pale and sad, with great, grey eyes, under which were black circles, rosy, wet eyelids, but white lips. Her hair fell in disorder over her forehead, curling behind her ears down to her shoulders. My first lines, in a slanting English handwriting, were to this effect:

Had passed a miserable night; impossible to sleep; strange dream, and awoke trembling; pity and mercy asked in the same line. Then the ball of the night before was spoken of; she had been very unhappy and had left full of presentiment, although he was there. "Why was this?"

She leant on the desk, her head on her hand, and fell into a reverie. Her sleeve fell back and I felt the perfume of her warm, soft arm penetrate me. She remained thus for some time, her beautiful, large eyes full of sad thoughts. Suddenly two tears gathered, and I began to understand the sense of the words "Why was this?" The tears trembled on her eyelids, then ran down her cheek. The poor little woman sighed and returned to me.

He had been very neglectful at the ball, and she had caught his eye only once or twice. . . . The pen began to write rapidly, the words were scratched off, sentences followed each other without punctuation, a passionate love filled my pages in a retrospective glance. "The transport of the first days," doubts, timidity, the avowal, first kisses. Then the day when jealousy was awakened, so terrible, yet so charming, terror, agony, if ten minutes late, the promise of eternal fidelity, renewed vows—all this as the eyes rained tears and the pen went on impetuously, tightly held in the thin fingers.

My four pages were full, when someone entered the room. I fell among a pile of letters, faded flowers and debris of all sorts. In one corner lay a white cravat, twisted round a little dried-up bouquet. It was of corded muslin and made me suddenly think of a certain date, of which I speak later.

When I was taken out of hiding the young woman was dressed ready to go out, with a thick veil covering her red-lidded eyes. She added two words, "Come to-night," and I waited impatiently for a name that I expected to see, when I felt two fresh, warm lips pressed so passionately against me that the paper crackled.

Then a flower was slipped between my leaves, and I was shut up in an envelope and addressed, and the—ah, I cannot say for sure what happened. My impressions are vague. I was put in a pocket later, where I found a little handkerchief damp with the tears I had seen wiped away.

We were together until once more I was brought forth, but to fall into a vile box, where I remained all alone. It had an opening on top from which I could see people passing to and fro. I was kept here a long time, and thought I should never get out again, when thump, a heavy mass fell on me, then another, and still another. I was nearly stifled under the load. A hideous blue envelope fell on my side, as if to crush me out of existence. Perhaps it contained some villainous news, some hypocritical lie, some message of evil, and I, yet palpitating from the fine English handwriting on my pages, had to be mixed up with all this.

A key clicked in the lock, crick, crack, and an enormous red hand plunged into the box, and, taking the packet, disappeared and came again. Twice I slipped between his big fingers—I was too delicate for such handling—but I was seized at last and crumpled up in a bundle tied with string. Then I was carried along till we were surrounded by voices, scratching of pens, and I was seized anew by a hand that pressed something dreadful upon me. I received two dire strokes right over the poor little flower between my pages.

When I came to myself again I found myself on a chimney-piece, the room filled with shadows of the dying day. At length, after a long wait, my envelope was torn open and I was glanced over rapidly by two superb but icy-cold blue eyes, so dry and hard that they gave me a shock. Only my first lines were read—he seemed to divine the rest—and then he threw me roughly on the chimney-piece again; the flower fell unheeded to the floor—I saw it no more.

The one who rejected me so unkindly was a very handsome man, tall and well-made, with curly, blonde hair and long, carefully-trimmed moustache. He was elegantly dressed, and his hands were white and delicate.

As I lay in an uncomfortable position close to a chandelier, the man, evidently forgetful of my existence, devoted his attention to tying a white cravat (the mate of the one in the desk), and no doubt at this very moment my dear friend who sent me forth this morning was wondering how I was being received.

Oh, if I could only efface all that she had confided in me! He re-read me, however, after a time, and little by little memory awakened in turn over the history contained therein, but his expression remained hard and cold.

Reproaches, tears, heart-throbs, all were unavailing. I heard him murmur, as he paced up and down the room: "If I go there will be more tears, and what is to be done? It is not my fault that I do not love her any longer. I am decided. I cannot go to-night. I will write and tell her so. I will say—" and he wrote.

What a difference from this morning, when I saw a sweet woman's face bending over me, feverish with emotion caused by thoughts of him, and this man seated before a table searching his brain for phrases to fit, but the words would not come any more easily than the ideas. He tore up six pages before finishing three lines.

I tell you all this from the bottom of a drawer where I am lying. There are letters and faded flowers and ribbons all round me and I recognise the perfume of my tear-stained pages. Where shall I be to-morrow? What will become of me? This is my thought as I dream of the black eyes full of tears and the cold blue eyes that have ceased to respond.

L. M. N.

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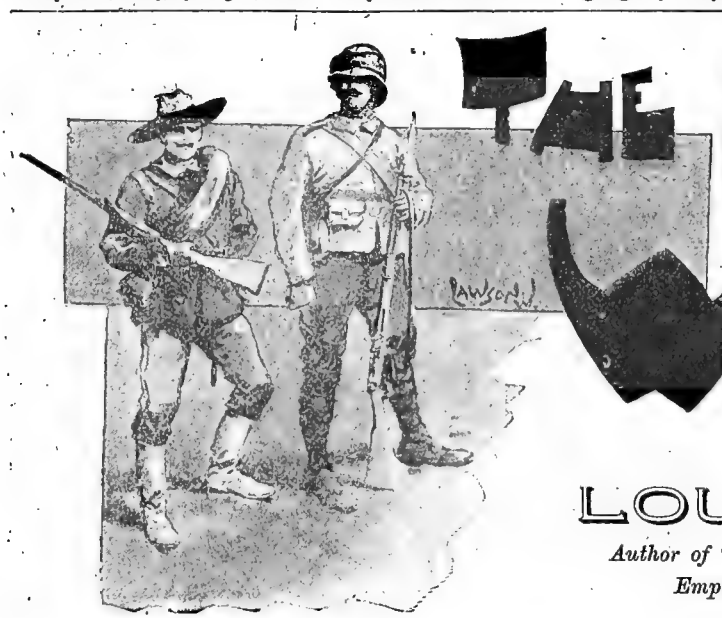
The Summary will Enable You to Begin this Magnificent Serial To-day.



THE FINAL WAR

BY

LOUIS TRACY.

Author of "The Shadow Hand," "An American Emperor," "The Lost Provinces," etc.

SUMMARY.

Time 1898. Irene, daughter of Lord Eskdale, Ambassador at Paris, is engaged to Captain Edward Harington, Lord Eskdale's military *attaché*, and Lieutenant Rodney, of H.M.S. *Magnificent*, to Harington's sister, Ethel.

France and Germany declare war against Great Britain.

An attempt to land at Worthing is made by a combined French and German fleet of 36 ironclads, 40 troopships, and 100 smaller boats. The local volunteers hold them in check till the regulars arrive from London.

An inventor secures an audience with the Prince of Wales and demonstrates to him the utility of a new weapon, with the result that steps are immediately taken to manufacture an enormous number of them.

The *Hornet*, a torpedo boat, commanded by Rodney, blows up the Suez Canal. Paris is in a state of fermentation owing to the repulse of the Allied fleet.

Admiral Sir Michael Culmo-Seymour's fleet gains a decisive victory over the Allies off the Rock of Gibraltar.

A representative of the *New York World* interviews Lord Salisbury on a matter that is not yet made public.

The British organise two expeditions, one to invade France, and one to invade Germany. The first army corps appears off Havre, and after a short bombardment which lasts till nightfall, the fleet withdraws, the troopships move northwards, and the soldiers are landed at a point opposite Blèville.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Capture of Havre.

To the 8th Chasseurs à Pied, led by General d'Aubigny in person, was given the honour of leading the attack on the British centre.

Their advance through Blèville had been skilfully covered by the 102nd and 72nd Infantry, who had thrown forward a thick cloud of skirmishers. These, however, hung back owing to the very warm reception they were receiving from a body of troops which lined a narrow belt of trees fringing some brushwood at the base of the rising ground capped by ten field batteries.

D'Aubigny saw his chance of not only discomfiting the occupants of this favourable cover but also rendering the position of the artillery untenable by reason of the excellent mark they would offer to his men, firing at ease and in comparative safety at a distance of about 1,000 yards.

Driving his feet home in the stirrups, dropping the reins on his horse's neck, with képi in his left hand and sword aloft, the handsome soldier turned round in the saddle and cheered his men on. The bugles and drums crashed in the *pas de charge*, the regiment gave a frantic shriek of exultation, and a wild dash was made over the intervening space of 200 yards.

An answering and deeper roar came from the trees, and the French rush had hardly commenced before the 42nd Highlanders sprang out to meet them.

Once before—long years ago at Corunna—had the Black Watch crossed bayonets with Frenchmen whilst both regiments were charging simultaneously. Not for one instant had the result of that fearful crash of arms been in doubt, and if the dim shades from the Peninsula had been able to witness the manner in which their successors hurled back the 8th Chasseurs à Pied they must have cried in ghostly glee: "Ah, the regiment never dies!"

It was hardly fair to the Frenchmen to ask them to meet that charge.

By sheer weight alone they were driven to the earth as a terrier might be repulsed by a mastiff. General d'Aubigny's horse reared and fell on top of him, and Colonel Wauchope jumped his charger over his prostrate foe as he galloped furiously to the front to prevent the pursuit from being pushed too far. It was no part of Lord Roberts' plan to occupy Blèville—yet.

General d'Aubigny's horse reared and fell on top of him.

"Hech, mon, but this is a braw day for Galashiels," said an elderly sergeant, as he followed his section back to the cover of the trees.

"They're the 8th Chasseurs" (he pronounced it Chassoors), said a private, turning over the body of a Frenchman with his foot. "D'ye ken the meanin' o't?"

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"It's an eediom," replied the sergeant, "but the Scoatch equeevalent is 'rinnin' awa'.'"

D'Aubigny, who was thought to be dead, was only stunned. When he regained his senses some hours later, the tide of battle had rolled over him, and he was able to escape northwards in the dusk.

Under the guidance of Brigadier-General McCalmont.

The action became general by 8.30 a.m., and by nine o'clock Bléville was very strongly held by the enemy. The French front was narrower than the British, owing to the mad haste with which troops had been hurried along the parallel roads coming up from the east of Havre.

General de Rosny, quickly perceiving that he was not getting the due advantage of his superior numbers, threw forward a strong force of cavalry and guns to turn the British left flank.

The guns, thirty-six of them, occupied a slight eminence on the extreme left front of the British line, and opened fire with shrapnel with such beautiful precision that half-an-hour of such work would practically destroy that wing.

Their cavalry at the same time delivered a front charge, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have proved sheer madness against British infantry in line of columns, but which was now a really brilliant piece of strategy, whilst the ranks were being thrown into confusion by the murderous hail of shrapnel.

But some such contingency had been foreseen, and a British cavalry division of 3,000 sabres, led by Sir Baker Russell, in the uniform of the 13th Hussars, rode sharply out at the trot from behind the squares, and went straight for the French horsemen. The 17th Lancers were in front, followed by the Blues, the King's Dragoon Guards, the Queen's Bays, and the 3rd and 4th Hussars, two squadrons of the latter being left with Brigadier-General Massy, to be used at his discretion, for the further protection of the left wing.

With an appalling crash the opposing masses of horsemen met in mad career. The gradient of the ground was slightly against the Englishmen, who, although they stopped and beat back the French, were compelled to fight every yard of the way, the outcome of this inequality in the manœuvring space being one of the most sanguinary cavalry fights on record.

At last the French were fairly compelled to turn tail and bolt, and the guns quickly limbered up, as they knew that the next move of the British mounted contingent would be directed against them.

It was absolutely imperative therefore that they should return, unimpeded, by the way they had come.

Massy knew what the cessation of fire meant. "For Heaven's sake, stop them!" he shouted to Major Ramsay, who commanded the squadrons of Hussars, and no further directions were heeded.

The 4th bounded forward with a yell of delight, and Harington, who was mounted on a magnificent hunter, asked and obtained permission to go with them.

The guns were half a mile away, and the only practicable line of advance for the Hussars was rigidly circumscribed by a deep brook and a seemingly impassable belt of thick bushes.

The road followed by the guns crossed the front at a point easily distinguishable, and Major Ramsay swore a mighty oath as he realised that the French gunners must be able to pass that point before the 4th could reach it, ride they ever so hard.

Harington also saw the difficulty, and in that moment Irene's words, her imperious look, her queen-like gesture, came to him as an inspiration.

All thought of the future left his mind. He was possessed of the one idea that those guns must be stopped, and he alone in that gallant company knew exactly how to do it. Nay, he alone could do it, for his horse would succeed where inferior animals must fail.

For the next five minutes, he said afterwards, he was mad.

Quitting the squadron, he took his horse a flying leap across the stream, landing on the opposite bank at a spot where the tall hedge offered a small opening.

The thorough-bred hunter scrambled up the bank, pushed through the fence, Harington's face and tunic being badly cut by the thorns, and in a second the pair were flying across country to diagonally intersect the French line of retreat.

So busy were the gunners in plying whip and spur that they never noticed this solitary horseman, who was approaching the narrow, deeply-dyked lane along which they were thundering towards safety.

Leaping such obstacles as he encountered, Harington gained the roadway abreast of the leading gun. He charged the off-wheel horse with such an impact that the animal, with his fellow wheeler and driver, was driven sideways into the ditch on the far side of the road. The sudden check on the traces brought down the four leaders, the gun overturned, and the next gun smashed into it before the drivers could avert the disaster.

The road was hopelessly blocked, and two minutes later the Hussars were fiercely engaged in capturing thirty-six guns.

Teddy wheeled his horse after the shock of the encounter, leapt back across the dyke, and the terrified hunter forthwith bolted for the British lines at a pace he had never travelled behind a fox.

Lord Roberts had keenly watched the whole incident through his field-glasses. Whilst the Hussars and gunners were settling the question as to the possession of the field pieces he ordered the left wing to swing round and the centre to attack Bléville.

Lord Roberts hastily scribbled a despatch.

The time had come for the crucial movement of the day, and Sir Baker Russell's superb charge, followed by Harington's daring exploit, had opened the way for it.

General Massy was congratulating the Grenadier officer on his escape when a galloper arrived from the Commander-in-Chief, requesting his presence at the earliest opportunity, and Teddy hurried off, his hunter by this time having had some of the steam taken out of him.

When he saluted Lord Roberts, the latter looked keenly at him and said: "Major Harington, I desire to congratulate you. I shall have much pleasure in recommending her Majesty the Queen to decorate you with the Victoria Cross."

Promotion on the field is the rarest and perhaps dearest honour a soldier can receive, and Harington's emotion prevented him from uttering a word in reply.

The Duke of York, who was with the Commander-in-Chief, also spoke to him in terms of warm appreciation, and

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Teddy was quite grateful to a man who asked him how much he gave for the bay horse he was riding.

By eleven o'clock the position of the French Army was about as bad as that held by Napoleon's troops at Sedan.

Although not surrounded, they were terribly cramped for room. Before the pitiless fire of the Lee-Metfords they were fast losing men, and, what was worse, the *morale* of the troops was beginning to yield to circumstances.

Their superiority in field-guns was of no avail, as the roads were now hopelessly blocked, and more than half of their artillery was never in action. It could not get to the front.

A "Times" official met his lordship.

Excellent though the Lebel rifle was, it could not make such an impression upon the widely-spread British line as was produced by the continuous emptying of magazines by our troops into the dense masses of Frenchmen.

General de Rosny did not lose his head under these trying conditions.

He realised that he had been far too precipitate in the attack. Impetuosity and *élan* were of little avail against such a determined yet well-restrained foe, so he decided, too late, to fall back upon the line of forts, and give battle later in the day with fresh troops and with more skilful disposition of his forces.

He was a soldier of iron nerve and marvellous physique. Otherwise, he would never have succeeded in saving the lives of himself and several of his staff by pulling in a small boat over forty weary miles of the English Channel after the collapse of the attempted landing at Worthing.

But he miscalculated the most potent factor in warfare, whether ancient or modern, namely—human nature

His men were weary, hungry, and dispirited. Want of sleep, want of food, and above all, want of success, do not develop the best fighting qualities of the Frenchman. The order for retreat was a harbinger of disaster, and when the keen eye of Lord Roberts discerned the change—with the result that a series of desperate charges were pressed home by the British cavalry and infantry—the retreat became a rout, the French army lost all semblance of order, and the men plunged wildly into the one avenue of escape towards Havre, the ravine.

And during these desperate hours, where was the British artillery, whose motto is "Ubique," whose officers and men consider themselves the salt of the earth?

Only sixty of the two hundred guns available had come into action, and more than one experienced soldier had thought in the depths of his heart that Lord Roberts was not making sufficient use of the guns.

But when the French troops were streaming in tens of thousands into the broad and deep ravine, a hell fire of shrapnel and canister, at point blank range, was poured into them by 140 guns massed in a splendid position on the right flank, where they had up to that moment been comparatively useless.

The other guns limbered up and galloped furiously in the direction of Montivilliers, where, aided by the whole of the British cavalry, they were able to turn the flank of the second line of the retreat, and de Rosny, drawing rein on a hill near Sanvic, at last understood that a French army can advance, but it cannot retreat.

Haggard, gaunt, with exhaustion slowly conquering his physical force, and despair gnawing at his breast, the French Commander-in-Chief turned his bloodshot eyes upon an *aide-de-camp* who rode madly towards him from Havre.

It was yet little past noon. There was still hope! Reinforcements had arrived from Amiens or Rouen! Perchance an attack was about to be delivered on what was now the rear of the British line! The cruisers from the Mediterranean were about to engage the British fleet! Any of these things could retrieve the fortunes of the day.

"*Mon Général,*" cried the messenger, "*nous sommes détruits.* The English are in Havre. They have occupied Harfleur, and the railway line beyond that point is blown up. The Forts de l'Heure and de Tourneville have fallen, and they are attacking the Fort de Frileuse. General Bonnemain says it is a question——"

De Rosny stared at the officer during this recital with the horror of absolute mental collapse in his gaze.

"There is no question," he cried. "I will at least make a third attempt to serve France!" and, drawing a revolver from his holster, he blew his brains out before any member of his staff could interfere to prevent him.

. . . . . .

At nine o'clock that morning Lord Roberts had heliographed a message to Lord Charles Beresford that all was well on land and that the enemy were developing the attack on the lines anticipated.

The Admiral immediately gave orders for the return to Havre of the fleet and remaining transports with troops on board, the latter steaming leisurely and accompanied by a number of tugs and flat-bottomed boats.

In an hour's time the full strength of the fleet was again engaged in the bombardment, and a reconnaissance pushed well home showed that the Army Corps at Harfleur, Confreville and Videmare had hurried off in the direction of Bléville. The fort behind Ste. Adresse was silenced and the battery, Bastion de la Floride and Fort de l'Heure were in ruins.

Everything was ripe for the crowning blow.

Several gunboats advanced right into the Avant Port and vigorously engaged the citadel and the coast defence vessels, whilst thousands of troops made a dash for the Boulevard Maritime, the first landing being effected opposite the Hotel Frascati by the 1st Battalion of the 18th Royal Irish.

At the same time the tugs were rapidly towing a fleet of 300 boats, each holding 100 men, up the estuary to a point opposite the Vallée d'Oudalle, where a feeble opposition was speedily silenced by the fire of four cruisers, which had no difficulty in approaching close to the shore as a high spring tide was now available.

"We have occupied Havre!"

The 3rd and 4th Battalions of the King's Royal Rifle Corps were charged with the duty of seizing the approaches to Harfleur and Gainneville. They experienced a temporary check at the canal, but the 60th is seldom at a loss for expedients. Two barges were seized, placed lengthwise across the canal and lashed together, thus providing a capital bridge for the passage of infantry.

Major Vere gained the D.S.O. by leading a detachment of twenty men who swam to the other side and swung the barges under a heavy fire from troops advancing through the valley.

Some sharp fighting took place at this point and in the streets of Havre.

But the British forces considerably outnumbered their opponents at both places, and the spirits of the men had

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been raised to the highest pitch by the sounds of the inland battle, from which they had been debarred.

By noon a junction was effected opposite Harfleur, which was carried at the point of the bayonet, and Major-General Lord Methuen, who was in command, personally led a rapid advance upon the Fort de Frileuse.

Here a slice of luck aided the British troops.

The flight of fugitives through the main gate of the fortress had frightened a team of commissariat horses, and a bad smash-up of waggons jammed the drawbridge.

Before the wreckage could be cleared, the Royal Irish Regiment dashed upon the guard, and in ten minutes all defence was at an end.

Some 8,000 troops, under the guidance of Brigadier-General McCalmont, had been detached from the main Havre contingent and marched through the Place de l'Hotel de Ville, Rue Thérèse and Ingouville, towards the Fort de Tourneville, whose commander promptly capitulated, a feat for which he would have been shot had he fallen into the hands of his enraged fellow-countrymen afterwards.

By nightfall Havre was fully occupied, but there was no rest for the weary troops, who at once proceeded to throw up field fortifications on all the roads which offered easy access for troops coming from the north or centre of France.

The victory had cost us some 8,000 men in killed and wounded, besides the loss of a cruiser and some gunboats, but the official estimate of the French loss was 30,000, and no fewer than 42,000 prisoners were taken.

The most valuable prize that fell into the hands of the British was a park of artillery, 850 field guns, with 400 rounds of ammunition per gun, which were stowed away on the vessels in the Basin de l'Eure, together with a vast quantity of useful stores, in which the British Army was sadly deficient owing to the haste in preparation for the invasion.

* * * * *

Throughout the fight round Blèville a small knot of civilians attached to the Commander-in-Chief's staff took a professional interest in the proceedings quite apart from that felt by the combatants.

The representatives of the English and American Press were almost as anxious concerning "copy" as they were for the result of the engagement.

Chief among these were the war correspondents of the Times and the New York World. The Times' man was more experienced in war alarms than his *confrère* from the States. He knew almost as well as Lord Roberts the exact moment when the battle had irretrievably gone against the French, and by reading the heliographs from dispatch vessels in the offing he was also acquainted with the progress of events at Havre. Indeed, this was common knowledge to all.

The New York World's correspondent was disgusted when he saw his rival turn his horse's head and gallop off towards the shore, whilst the issue was apparently trembling in the balance, but he had his reward.

Shortly afterwards Lord Roberts hastily scribbled a dispatch, and handed it to a field officer, whom he instructed to proceed at once to Southampton in the *Racer*, and supplement his brief announcement of the victory by a more detailed statement written during the passage.

Mr. Chauncey sought and obtained permission to accompany this officer, as did all the other correspondents, and as they raced to the landing place they saw a steam tug laboriously throbbing its way seawards.

"There goes the slow old Times," he shouted gleefully to the others. "I guess we'll throw him a tow rope before three o'clock." It was then 1.15 p.m.

But in his headlong ride for the shore, Mr. Chauncey had not noticed, far out at sea, a small and graceful steam yacht, the *Enchantress*, belonging to a millionaire colliery proprietor—a vessel whose trials on the Clyde had created a sensation by revealing a speed of over thirty knots an hour.

As the *Racer* steamed away north, she passed the returning tug, and there was no Times' man on board that slow but useful craft.

The Times had long waited for a war which would seem of sufficient importance in the eyes of its conductors to warrant haste in collecting news—haste which might otherwise be unseemly.

Such a war had now commenced. The occasion was worthy even of the best energies of the greatest newspaper in the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

What "The Times" Did.

The Times correspondent was Lord Dunraven.

When he reached the cabin of the *Enchantress*, where an expert typewriter was awaiting him, he methodically arranged his notes, secured the current copies of the Army and Navy Lists, and devoted a good half-hour's thought to his subject before he uttered a word.

Then he started, and by the time the yacht had drawn up alongside the landing-stage at Southampton a ten-thousand word report, fully descriptive of the bombardment, the landing of the troops, and the battle itself was ready to be telegraphed to London. A Times official met his lordship as he stepped ashore, and told him that a large staff of telegraphists, with two Wheatstone instruments, were awaiting him at the post office. For this reason the editor had departed from his original intention of securing the delivery of the "copy" by special train.

Raced through the streets.

Lord Dunraven drove rapidly to the post-office, and having handed in his fateful message, demanded from the postmaster the use of the telephone.

"You cannot reach the Times office by that means," was the reply. "The wire only extends to St. Martin's-le-Grand, and we are forbidden to switch on to the National Telephone Company's system.

His lordship was about to burst forth into a bitter objurgation on red tape and its absurd restrictions when the postmaster continued.

"Those are the rules, but I'm jiggered if I don't break 'em. I'll have you through in half a minute, sir. Kindly step inside and sit down in front of the instrument." Then curiosity overcame the claims of duty, and he added: "Perhaps you'll tell us the news, sir, after you have finished."

It was five minutes past six, and the only cause of the excellent postmaster's momentary stiffness about the telephone lay in the fact that had the long telegraphic message been delivered for transmission a minute before the hour he could have charged a shilling for every seventy-five words instead of the cheaper press rate for night work.

The managing editor of the Times in person answered the telephone, and the following curious conversation took place:

"Who's there?"

"Dunraven."

"Oh, I'm Moberley Bell. Had a good passage?"

"First-rate. We've taken Havre!"

"Capital. How much?"

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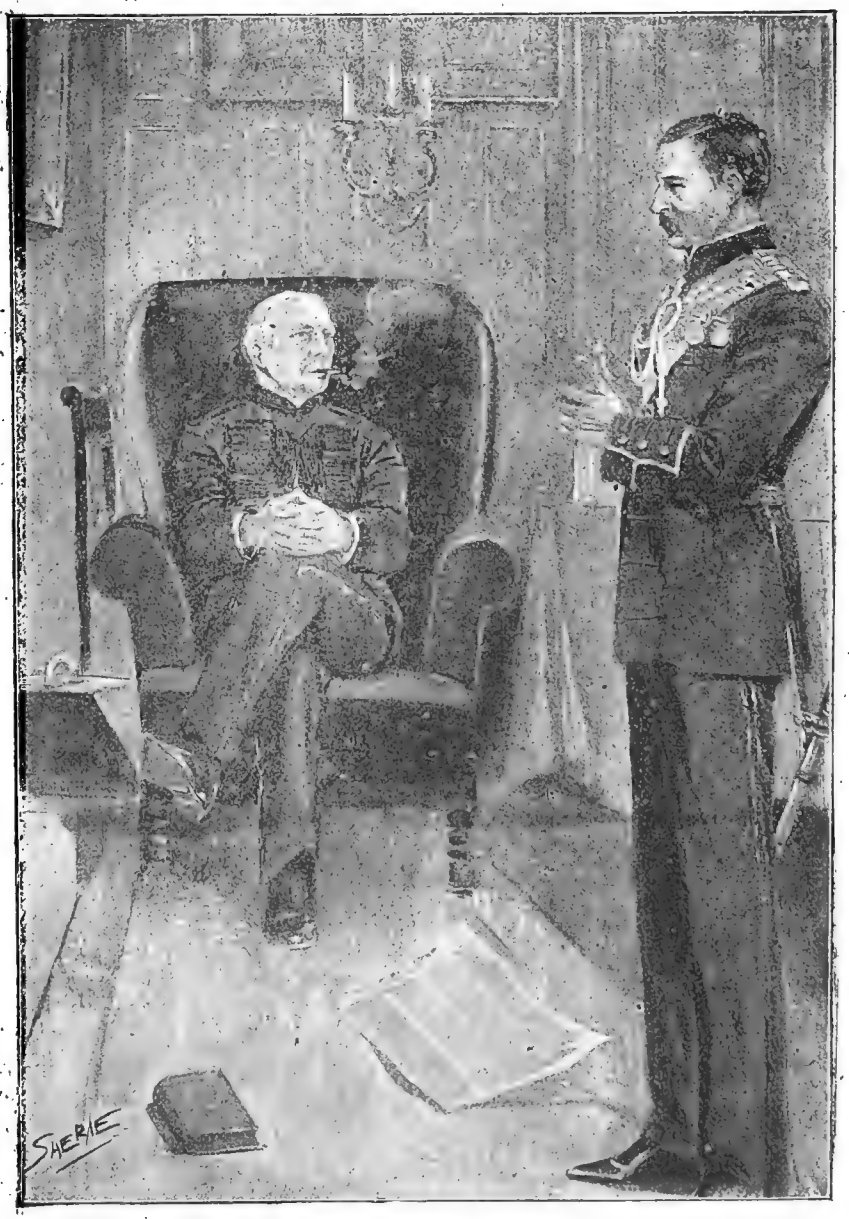

"I have spent the night in reading and smoking and thinking."

"I beg your pardon?"

"How much copy have you sent?"

"Five columns. It is now on the wire."

"This is superb. Where are the rest?"

"The rest of what?"

"The other newspaper men."

"About two hours behind me, I reckon."

"Ah, that justs suits my plans. Now dictate me about three hundred words of the events of the past two days."

Lord Dunraven gave Mr. Moberley Bell the desired synopsis, adding, at the conclusion of the recital, "I'm off back again after I've bought some things I'm short of, and the telegraphists assure me the message has gone through all right."

"Very well. There will be a cable laid by the middle of the week. Good-bye, and good luck!"

"Just one final word. I am short of cigars. Send some. The Chief's staff would appreciate a few boxes."

At 7.30 p.m. Lord Dunraven bought a copy of the Southern Echo containing, "by the courtesy of the editor of the Times," a reproduction of his telephonic message, and the following remarkable announcement:

"The proprietors of the Times have purchased the use of our printing machines for the remainder of this evening, and a special edition of the Times will be issued from this office at 8.30 p.m. containing a full descriptive report of the capture of Havre. Similar arrangements have, we understand, been made in every important town in the United Kingdom."

When Mr. Chauncey quitted the *Racer* at the landing-stage at eight o'clock the first person he met was Lord Dunraven.

"Been here long?" he inquired.

"Two hours," was the laconic reply, and his lordship handed the American the paper he was reading.

Chauncey cast his eye over the double-leaded paragraphs already referred to. He was too good a fellow to bear malice, so he smiled as he said:

"It's a clean scoop. You might wait five minutes and take me back. I guess we taught you a bit whilst you were trying for the Cup!"

* * * *

By special resolution, Parliament sat every day during the war at six p.m.

The House had barely opened when Mr. Balfour entered, and his obvious excitement as he intervened in a debate concerning the remission of income tax on small incomes, sent a thrill through the Chamber.

"We have occupied Havre!" he shouted, and the yell with which his news was received departed from all Parliamentary precedent. Mr. H. W. Lucy devoted a large part of his "Sketch in the House" to comparison of that particular cheer with the usual *roulade* of applause which obtains in St. Stephen's, and came to the conclusion that the record established on the night of the downfall of the second Gladstone Ministry—when Lord Randolph Churchill gave the time by jumping on to the front Opposition bench—was hopelessly broken.

The Leader of the House exclaimed, as soon as he could obtain a hearing, that the only intelligence received

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by the Government was that placed at their disposal by the Times. "But," he added, "this is not the first occasion when a great newspaper has outpaced the authorities in the conveyance of news of national importance and rendered signal service to England by its enterprise and resource."

For one fierce moment Dr. Tanner longed to leap to his feet and cry "Remember Piggott!"

But he was now the pampered hero of the House of Commons, and his popularity was too new-born to be exposed to the chill blast of an untimely interruption.

At Exeter Hall a May meeting of the Peace Society had assembled in earnest conclave. Speaker after speaker had urged that the present iniquitous war only demonstrated more clearly the imperative necessity for general disarmament and international arbitration, suggested by the Tsar the year before, when the deep roar of a vast crowd in the Strand penetrated to the spacious room where the members of the society were gathered.

Suddenly a young cleric entered with a newspaper in his hand, and gave it to the chairman. Lady Henry Somerset, who was delivering an impassioned address on the horrors of war, paused as the elderly chairman rose from his seat.

"Brethren," he said, "it is given here, on the responsibility of the Times, that the English arms have prevailed, and that the French are in full retreat along the north bank of the Seine."

No member of the Peace Society ever afterwards alluded to the scene that followed, but the room was not required for the evening meeting.

And imperial London herself gathered together in the stupendous majesty of her millions, tossed her head in mad delight at the news. Her people raced through the streets and did absurd things in the delirium of their joy. Distinctions of class and rank disappeared in the face of such glad tidings, and fabulous prices were given for copies of the late edition of the Times, which was turned out at the rate of a million copies an hour, every printing machine in Fleet Street being utilised, as the elements of journalistic competition did not enter into that pæan of national rejoicing.

It was afterwards estimated that four million copies of the Times were sold that night throughout the country at a recognised cost of one penny each.

The great paper next day modestly confined its references to the feat to a bare enumeration of the different journals by whose kindly help it was enabled to supply Great Britain and Ireland with the intelligence so eagerly looked for.

"The cost of the undertaking amounted to about £5,000," said the Times, "and the proceeds of the sale will probably leave a profit of an equal sum. We have determined to devote that amount to head a list of donations which we ask from our readers for the purpose of providing the necessary funds for an organisation which will be named the Army Aid Society.

"This Society will undertake to supply our armies in the field with such medical comforts and other simple but necessary luxuries as cannot in the nature of things be arranged for departmentally.

"It will be administered by two members of Parliament, two experienced commissariat officers, two army chaplains, and two doctors, who, with the managing editor of the Times, will form a committee of nine persons charged with the efficient and discriminating purchase and distribution of the requisite articles."

Thus was inaugurated the famous Society which did so much during the subsequent progress of the war to lighten the suffering of the troops serving abroad and to cheer their rare moments of relaxation.

Money was subscribed in tens of thousands of pounds, and the Army Aid Society kept Tommy well stocked with extra clothing, blankets, costly surgical appliances, wines, preserved fruits and pickles, selected brands of tobacco, books, periodicals, musical instruments, and the like.

Never was fund so successful, and never had a philanthropic proposal received so magnificent a send-off as £5,000 from the originating journal.

It may be here mentioned that months later, when Lord Dunraven was the guest of the evening at a banquet given in his honour by the staff of the Times, Mr. Walter, the principal proprietor, presented him with a handsome volume containing a copy of every newspaper which had published the Times' report on that eventful night.

In sheets of many sizes and different colours, in every variety of type and headline display, they formed a unique and remarkable collection, of which the recipient might well be proud.

* * * * *

The only man in London who was not carried away by the exultation of the moment was Lord Wolseley.

With characteristic caution he waited calmly until Lord Roberts' dispatch had arrived, and he then closely questioned the staff officer who brought it regarding various passages in the longer report the latter had prepared.

Still the Commander-in-Chief's face wore an anxious expression. He passed some time at the United Service Club, and then returned to his room at the Horse Guards.

Realising that he could not sleep, and that departmental work was impossible at so late an hour, he took a small volume of "Plutarch's Lives" out of an inner pocket of his overcoat, and settled himself in an easy-chair with a cigar.

But ever and anon he started to his feet and paced the room with quick, uncertain strides, as the same perplexing problem presented itself to his mind. By sheer force of will he would resume perusal of the book and lose himself in its marvellous pages, until some chance allusion would again conjure up the difficulty which he had resolved to dismiss as impossible of solution until the next day should have passed.

On Sunday morning the Adjutant-General, on his way to the Horse Guards, encountered thousands of Londoners hurrying to church and chapel to return thanks to Providence for the victory vouchsafed to England, and to ask aid and sustenance in the future.

Entering Lord Wolseley's apartments he was surprised and alarmed at the hard appearance of his chief.

"Have you had no rest?" he said, with some degree of perturbation.

"No. I have spent the night in reading and smoking, and thinking—the latter unwillingly."

"Let me send out for some breakfast," said Sir Redvers Buller. "You must not allow yourself to run below par in this fashion."

"I will take some tea, thank you, Buller," replied the Commander-in-Chief, "but I can neither eat nor sleep until I have heard from Evelyn Wood. Roberts has won half the game; the other half is settled by this time, but we cannot know before to-night."

(To be continued.)

ONE MILLION COPIES

OF

THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

READY OCTOBER 14th.

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A Coward and a Hero.

It was the sixteenth of December, before Son-Tay. For two days we had splashed in the mire of the rice fields, the water up to our knees. I knew well we could get used to it, but it was worrying all the same. Nevertheless, we marched steadily on, as regular and attentive as if we were at drill.

I tell you, this is true. I am an old hand; I have been nine years in the service and six with the rank of sergeant, and the number of young soldiers I have trained and commanded "right about face" is incalculable, but never have I seen men march like these, shoulder to shoulder, as exact as if drawn by a line; and that, I tell you, in two feet of mud. *Sapristi!* but it was superb. I was jubilant, and yet a little vexed, to see how well the scamps could keep step when they chose. Ah! well; I had nothing to complain of that day.

Halt! Well, not a bit too soon, I thought, and yet a droll place to halt in. No matter. I filled my pipe, and looked round to see where we were. Rice fields to the right and the left, and behind us a thick slush made by our trampling feet. A little corporal who has a tongue well hung, indeed, too well hung, called out to me:

"Sergeant Bertrand, Sergeant Bertrand, no need to light your pipe. Wait a while, they will light it for you."

The jackanapes! As if I didn't know we should soon be under the fire of the enemy. Suddenly I heard them calling the roll of my company, and saw my brave fellows break ranks and trot like rabbits across the rice fields to meet the baggage-master, who was returning with a great package under his arm.

Letters! Now, I ask you, was this a good time to distribute letters? There they were, running like so many madmen. I was the only one to remain tranquil. It is true, I have no one to write to me, no family—no friends, nobody—all alone in the world, like an old bear. Heaven help me! At last I see my men return to their places, holding up their hands to keep their letters from being soiled by the water, as carefully as if they were guarding the last words and testimony of their dying mothers. Ah! Jacque has a letter.

"News from home, Jacque?"

Jacque is a sergeant in my company. I am chief of the first section, he of the second. A handsome young fellow with a bright boyish face, a beardless chin, and cheeks as smooth as a girl's. Nevertheless, I have a little grudge against him. It is always vexing to see these brats of twenty-two promoted alongside of an old trooper like me, but for all that he is a nice boy, and the men would go through fire and water for him. He is well connected, of good family, and often receives letters with the seal of the war department, but that is his business, not mine.

I watched him out of the corner of my eye as he ran through his letter. Then I saw him wipe away a tear, a little tear, which glistened on the end of his eyelash. I pretended not to see it, even joked a little, to make him laugh.

"What has she written to you, Jacque? What says my fair lady?"

He turned to me without a smile, and gravely said:

"I have no lady fair, Bertrand. It is from my mother."

"Ah!" I felt as if I had made a fool of myself, and said no more, but Jacque continued:

"Do you see these letters, Bertrand? It would be better not to receive them in times like these."

That was my opinion, as I have already said. It was not good to allow them to break ranks, the scamps; they ask nothing better. But out of politeness to Jacque, I said:

"It is always pleasant to receive good news from home, no matter where one happens to be. I hope you have heard nothing disagreeable."

Jacque shook his head.

"Oh, no; on the contrary."

That was all. Really Master Jacque was not talkative this morning. His eyes were fixed on the horizon far away, where there was nothing to be seen but a bit of blue sky. I wondered what he could see over there.

"Forward, march!" I repeated, at last. "Forward, march!" for my section.

Jacque, no doubt, was still dreaming, and did not hear the command, for I heard the lieutenant behind me say:

"Ah, well, Sergeant Jacque, lagging behind—already?"

I hoped to hear a reply of some kind, no matter what. When an officer so far forgets himself as to speak in that way to a subordinate, I like to see a little indignation. *Parbleu!* you dare not speak out loud; that is against the rules, but a muttered word under your breath is a solace to your self-respect.

But Jacque said not a word, he simply repeated "Forward, march!" in a dragging tone, as if he were weary. That is to say, it was not the tone a French sergeant uses when he commands "Forward, march!" They never mumble those two words, but shout them out with enthusiasm. What was the matter with Sergeant Jacque this morning? He was not like himself.

Ah, that was a rough day, I tell you. When night came, we were still in the water, but up to our waists this time. And all round us little field-pieces were spitting fire, like so many demons. But we marched steadily on, until we were within 500 yards of the citadel. Not a gun-shot, not a movement; the rascals

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were saving their powder until we were nearer. I said to myself:

"Wait, old fellow, you will have something to warm you up by and by; don't be discouraged."

When, behold, we were again commanded to halt. The captain stepped in front of the ranks, and asked in a low voice—all the same it was distinctly understood:

"A non-commissioned officer willing to undertake a secret and dangerous mission."

Naturally I stepped forward. Now, I have the misfortune to be a little too well appreciated by my captain, an old toughskin like myself, who had been my lieutenant in Africa.

"Not you, Bertrand. I know you well, and when I want you I will find you. Just be kind enough to remain quiet."

You see, some officers will not grant you the least favour. Then I said to myself:

"This is just the thing for Jacque."

The captain seemed to be of the same opinion, for he stopped exactly in front of him and repeated under his nose:

"A non-commissioned officer willing to undertake a dangerous mission."

It was plainly to be seen he was making advances to Jacque, and you will think I am joking when I tell you my fine fellow lowered his eyes under the gaze of the captain and said not a word. You may be sure the captain was angry, for it is not pleasant to make advances to any one and have them thrown back in your teeth. I heard him sneer under his moustache:

"Well, he means to take good care of his skin."

Ah, it was rough. Jacque turned as red as a beet, but said not a word; only when the captain had passed he raised his eyes and fixed them on that bit of blue sky far away on the horizon, where I could see nothing, nothing at all. Then I said to myself:

"Well, my fine fellow, you are decidedly a coward."

To be brief, Berthelot of the third division was chosen for this expedition; he returned without even a scratch, the jackanapes, when my poor Jacque——

Well, we set off again: there was no lagging behind this time. About two hundred and fifty yards from the walls the scoundrels gave us a broadcast in the face. *Sapristi!* how it rained. The balls fell to the right, to the left, in the rice fields, making a "flic floc" as they struck the water. We answered them; but it was like firing in the air, the rascals were so well protected by their walls. This fusillade lasted only about ten minutes, but I shall remember it a long time.

However, it could not continue in this way. The bugle sounded the charge. *Sapristi!* That music always sends a shiver of gaiety through me. Behold us running with fixed bayonets, like madmen! But, as I had already noticed, the gateway of the citadel opened upon a high embankment, scarcely three yards wide; to enter that we must climb the narrow ascent and push in, two by two, under a terrible fire, and that, too, through a palisade of bamboo, which the rascals had constructed to bar the way, already narrow enough. Ah, it was sufficiently difficult without that bamboo, and goodness only knows what it cost us. I saw my two lieutenants fall, the adjutant of the battalion, and many others. Impossible to pass that confounded bamboo. My captain raged like a demon. At last he commanded:

"A section up there!"

This time it was serious—very serious. No time to hesitate; all who climbed there would go to certain death. I think the captain must have retained some spite against Jacque, for he turned to him and said:

"Go up there, sir, and tear away that bamboo."

It is but justice to say he did not wait to be told a second time. Touching his cap, with "All right, captain," he started in a quick run. In passing me he drew a package of letters from his pocket.

"Take care of this for me, Bertrand," and in the twinkling of an eye he was up with his section.

Brave boy! It was beautiful to see him, so cool, so calm; not a loud word, not an oath, only quick, determined orders. "Tear away this," "throw that in the ditch." He was as tranquil as if superintending a squad of soldiers on fatigue duty. And all the time the enemy were pouring upon them a deadly fire, the balls whistling, tearing the bamboo, ploughing up the ground, every now and then crushing in a shoulder, carrying away an arm, or breaking a leg. What a sight it was! They were all left there, all my comrades — Jacque among the number, but he was the last. Just as the work was finished a ball struck him between the eyes. Just as he raised his arms to shout a great "Hurrah!" he fell dead, face foremost.

Perhaps it was not very proper, what I did next morning, but really it was too much for me—that packet of letters that Jacque gave me as he went to his death. I would not keep them, I thought, "a boy who acts like a coward, and a few hours after dies like a man. It is unnatural, there must be something under this;" and I felt I had the explanation there under my hand in those letters. They burned me. It was impossible to keep them. *Ma foi!* I could not; then—then I drew out the packet.

Upon my word there was only one letter, the one he had received that morning. Nothing else. And what a letter it was! He was right, poor boy. One ought not to receive a letter like that just before a battle. As for me, I cried like a baby, and was scarcely able to read it for the tears in my eyes. It was from his mother, and here is what the good woman wrote to her boy as she ended her letter:

"Now, my precious Jacque, take care of yourself for my sake. Remember, you are all I have in this world, and if anything should happen to you, I should surely go mad. It is true the time passes very wearily when one is waiting, but I try to be patient, to forget the present, and only think of the future when you will return. Above all things, my precious boy, be prudent. Do whatever you are commanded to do like a brave soldier, but do not expose yourself unnecessarily. I forbid you. No, no, my darling Jacque, I forbid you nothing. I implore you, before entering into any engagement, to think of your mother, who is always thinking of you, and do not risk too much. Promise me this. will you not? And remember, a man is not a coward because he loves his mother."

The letter fell from my hands. I understood all now. He had thought of his mother, the brave boy, and waited until he was directly commanded to go. And, no doubt, that morning, when he was looking far away to that bit of blue sky where there was nothing to be seen, he was thinking of his mother and of that promise he had sworn to keep.

And that is why Sergeant Jacque, who died like a hero with his face to the enemy, was considered a coward earlier in the day.

Harry Dunstan.

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CAUGHT IN MY OWN TRAP.

Dora and I had been silent fully fifteen minutes—an unusual occurrence for us—when she suddenly broke out into one of her gayest, sweetest peals of laughter. The train was going at the rate of forty miles an hour, but Dora's laugh rang out above all the noise and confusion.

"What is it, Dora, you witch, you?" I said, half piqued that she had not first told me what pleased her, and laughed afterwards.

"Nothing, Nell, only I was just thinking of something funny," she said, in a hoarse whisper. "Do you see that gentleman in the opposite corner, with the beautiful black moustache and dreamy brown eyes? Well, he's been watching you behind that book for the last half hour, looking as if he would love to take a bite of the red roses on your cheeks. Don't blush, but he is in love with you. I know it. I was just thinking of some of the stories I have read about young ladies mistaking handsome young fellows for their brothers, and thought what fun it would be if you could only manage to mistake that gentleman for your brother Fred."

I was ready for fun in a moment.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," I broke out eagerly. "You know I haven't seen Fred since I went to Cambridge, three years ago, and of course he's changed a great deal since then. Well, if that literary gentleman with brown eyes (he is handsome, isn't he, Dora?) should get out at our station, I'll wait till he gets mixed up in the crowd, see him suddenly for the first time, rush up to him in a flutter of delight, call him Brother Fred, and give him such a kissing as he hasn't had since he saw his sweetheart last."

"Yes, I would, if I were you," said Dora sarcastically. "You daren't, you know."

"Don't I dare, though? Wait and see."

And so I dropped back into the cushion in silence till the train stopped at our station.

Dora gave me a wicked look, and whispered that she knew my courage would fail me, for the gentleman was really getting out.

I was not to be triumphed over, though; and so, as we stepped on to the platform I saw the literary gentleman standing amidst the crowd, and with a little bound threw myself in his arms, and kissing him full on the mouth, hysterically exclaimed:

"Fred, you dear brother, how do you do?"

I caught a glimpse of Dora—she was in danger of going into convulsions. I was expecting to hear the stranger say, confusedly, that there was some mistake, but, to my surprise, he gave me a hearty embrace—kissed me two or three times—said he was well—that I had grown a great deal, and inquired for my little friend Dora—who, all this time, was exciting the sympathies of the crowd, as they supposed she was insane, judging from her frantic laughter.

"Father and mother are expecting you, Nellie, and are so impatient they can hardly wait to see you. I was afraid you would not know me, but I am really glad that my image has been treasured up so carefully in my sister's heart."

I was bewildered beyond measure. It really was Fred, then, and I had not known him! I felt slightly ridiculous, and while introducing Dora to my brother, whispered her to keep quiet in reference to my intended trick.

I was too much confused to think of inquiring how he came to be in the compartment without seeing me; so we all went to the carriage which was waiting for us, and drove rapidly to our home.

I had never known Fred to be so affectionate. He held my hands in his own all the time, and kissed me at unnecessary intervals; but to tell the truth, I had never loved him half so well before—never thought him half so handsome.

We reached the gate. Mother kissed me and cried over me; father repeated it; and finally a frank, hearty voice broke out with:

"Hallo, sis! aren't you going to notice your scapegrace of a brother at all?"

And to my astonishment a handsome fellow I had not yet seen gave me a genuine hug, and a kiss that you could have heard across the garden.

"There is some mistake," I murmured; "are you my brother Fred? I thought that gentleman was," pointing at the handsome gentleman I had embraced at the station.

"Why, sis, are you crazy? Of course I'm your brother, and that fellow there is my college chum, Archie Winters, who went half way up to London to meet you. What are you blushing at, Nell? I didn't have time to go, and let him take your photo with him, so that he would be sure and know you. He's been playing off some of his mad pranks, and passing himself off for me, I'll warrant."

I looked at Archie Winters beseechingly, and as they were all going into the house, I whispered to him:

"For pity's sake, do not speak of that mistake. How could it have happened?"

"I overheard you talking in the carriage, and will keep your secret only on one condition."

He whispered something to me that made my face flush scarlet; but I was at his mercy, and said I would think of it, reader; and to the delight of the whole family—Dora and Fred in particular—Archie and I were married in less than six months. And Dora said to me, as I bade her good-bye, that it would give unspeakable delight to Fred and herself, if I would attend their wedding in two months, and I did so.

Gertrude Travers.

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A JERSEY IDYLL.

This is the story of Jean Bisson and Margaret Icart, the bravest man and the fairest woman in Grève de Lecq, which is the prettiest sea-nook on the north coast of Jersey—as it was told by honest Jean himself one summer's night at sea nearly twenty years ago to a wandering stranger who was whiling away a few weeks of rest and leisure in the little fishing village, and had a fancy for moonlight cruises over the changeful waters that lie between the Islands and the mainland of France.

"Marget and I grew up together from childhood in Grève de Lecq yonder, and many is the time I have carried her out on my back into the surf to meet her father's boat as it came in from the fishing before he went away to Newfoundland, and we never heard any more about him; and many is the time, too, that I have mourned that things could not have remained as they were then, when there was no care in all the world, and Marget and I loved each other with the child-love that is the best of all loves on earth.

"But, alas! we grew up as everyone must, and in time the friends and neighbours got to look upon us as made for each other, and talked about our marriage as something that would come round as surely as the next fishing would happen in due course. Marget and I, too, had understood each other about this ever since we had built sandhouses on the beach together, and played at housekeeping with shells and bits of drift-wood for furniture.

"When my elder brother Robert married, we were doing very well as partners in the fishing, and my share was quite enough to warrant me in going to Marget's mother and asking her to let my sweetheart come to me for good and all. She welcomed me as my own mother would have done, and so the matter was arranged, and Marget and I were as happy as any pair in the six islands.

"There seems to me to be some fate which prevents men and women being as happy as they think they ought to be; and that fate stepped in and kept Marget and me apart just when we thought we were coming together for the rest of our lives.

"A week before the day fixed for our wedding, I climbed the bluff that rises to the left of the harbour to have a look round with my glass, and saw a big three-masted schooner about twelve miles away to the north-west, seemingly waterlogged, and flying signals of distress. I ran down to the cottage and told my brother. Ours was the handiest boat for launching, so we found two other men who were willing to risk the run out, and after a bit of hard work, we had the boat safely outside the harbour and headed for the schooner.

"There was a very big sea running, and by the time we had made an offing of five or six miles it blew so hard that it was all we could do to keep the boat on her course. The vessel we were trying to make was drifting down the Channel before an easterly gale and steering very wild, as water-logged ships always do. She was evidently making water fast, for the nearer we got to her the lower she seemed to lie, and the heavier she seemed to pitch in the sea-way. When we were a couple of miles or so from her, working as well as we could to windward, so as to run down sharp when we got abreast of her, she was making such bad weather of it that we began to doubt if she would hold out till we reached her.

"It was like a race between the water and us which should have the lives of those on board, and at last Robert said:

"'Boys, if we don't get on a bit faster the schooner will be gone before we make her. D'ye think the boat'll stand another reef?'

"She was already staggering a good deal under the close-reefed lug, but we saw that Robert meant trying a bit more, and if he was ready to run the risk we were not going to hang back, and so we just nodded, for the wind was screaming so across the water that talking was not easy, and shook the reef out as quickly as we could with our numbed fingers. Then we hoisted the sail again, and sat close under the weather gunwale to keep her in trim.

"All this time the gale was blowing harder and edging more round to the south-east, and at last Robert gave the signal to me to ease off the sheet and run down to the schooner. When the boat's head fell off the wind, Robert half stood up in the stern sheets to mark her position, and as we rose to the top of a wave we all looked ahead and saw—nothing. The water and the leak had beaten us in the race, and our errand had been in vain. There was nothing to do but to go back. We took one last look over the water through the spray that

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drove nearly level across it, and then we dowsed the sail and got on the other tack to make for home.

"When we brought her head up to the wind we found that we could not get her to lie within three points of the island. The gale had kept veering southward, and we found ourselves half-an-hour later a good twelve miles off the shore and dead to leeward of the land. There was nothing for it but to try and beat up, and so all that afternoon and night we toiled against the ever-increasing gale, now gaining a mile and now being beaten back as far again, until we had lost all idea of where we were in the wilderness of blinding spray and black darkness.

"It was about two hours before daylight that we began to suspect that the boat was making more water than came over her side, and soon we could hear it spurting under our legs as we sat on the thwarts. We felt for the leak, and what we found told us that unless a miracle saved us, we were on our last trip on blue water. The pitching and straining of the boat had opened one of her seams almost from stem to stern, and every time she plunged, the water spurted in through the rent in her side in gallons. When we discovered it the rent was on the weather side, and consequently the open seam was mostly out of the waves, but if we had put her on the other tack she would have filled in an instant.

"This made things about as hopeless for us as they could be, for we couldn't go on the other tack without sinking, and yet if we kept on as we were going we knew enough of our position to be pretty certain that we should run under the full force of the gale on to the Paternosters, that great reef of rocks which lies off Cape Grosnez, and be dashed to pieces or drowned as the fates might decide.

"Therefore we had to decide between certain drowning and the chance of weathering the Paternosters, and so making some point on the island. Of course, we took the open chance, and kept the poor old leaky boat as close to the wind as we could.

"For over two hours more we drove on, breasting the great white-topped waves which broke over us in a hail-storm of spray as we rushed through them, and keeping the boat as clear of water as we could with the dipper and our hats, until the morning at last broke grey and dim over the misty sea, and showed us the long line of black cliffs that marked the coast of Jersey, looming to the southward under the low driving clouds, and right ahead the white broken water that was foaming round the sunken reefs of the Paternosters.

"Tack we dare not for fear of sinking before we reached the rocks, and to keep on meant only another kind of death.

"My brother, sitting at the tiller, took in our desperate situation at a glance the moment it was light enough to see clearly. He looked at the line of rocks to windward, then at the breakers ahead, and then at the rent in the side of the boat, and said:

"'There's only one chance for us now, lads. We must stop that leak somehow and tack, or none of us will see home and friends again. Take off your stockings and jam them into the seam and hold them there while I put her about; it's our only chance, and please God we'll keep the water out enough to float her until we make the harbour.'

"The next minute our sea-boots were off, and the next we were caulking the leak with our long woollen stockings, driving them in with thole-pins as best we could. Then at the word from Robert as he brought the boat's head to the wind we downed the sail, shifted it over, hoisted it on the other tack, and stood away for the island.

"We cleared the rocks, and our two mates kept the stockings jammed into the leak while I took the dipper and bailed the water out for dear life—and Marget.

"We headed well up for the harbour, and it was just a matter of whether we could keep afloat long enough to make the land or not. When all was done that could be done, Robert stretched out his cold wet hand to me and I grasped it, and he drew me to him and said in my ear—

"'Jean, it will be a miracle if either of us gets back alive. If I am taken and you left, promise me that you will care for Lorette and the little one, and the other little one that is coming, as though they were yours. They will have no one to look to but you, so promise me, Jean, in the name of the mother that bore us both.'

"In such a moment even Marget was forgotten, and I answered—

"'If it shall be so I will be a brother to Lorette and a father to the little ones as long as God shall give me strength to be so.'

"My brother made no reply, but he smiled and gripped my hand again, and so the promise was made good for ever.

"Half an hour later we were within a hundred yards of the mouth of the harbour, and we could see the neighbours running down to the end of the jetty to give us what help they could, though that would not be much if we failed to make the harbour mouth.

"We drove on heavily, for the boat was now nearly half-full of water, and just as we came within earshot of the shouts of encouragement and welcome home we sank in the trough of the sea and lost the wind for an instant. The sail flapped once and the boat's head fell off till she lay broadside-on to the end of the pier. The next moment a huge wave rose up behind us, and swept us like a straw upon its crest towards the granite wall that was now but a few yards off. I remember nothing more save the hiss of the seething wave as it hurled us forward, the cry of the people on the jetty, and a crash of splintering wood that was drowned by the roaring of water in my ears, and I sank amidst the ruins of the shattered boat.

"It was twenty days before my eyes opened on the world again, and when they did so I was lying in the best bedroom in Robert's house, and on one side of my bed stood Lorette and on the other Marget. My first question was for my brother and my boatmates, and as I asked it in a strange weak voice that startled me with its unfamiliar sound, I saw Lorette put her hands to her eyes and leave the room with bowed-down head.

"Then Marget, in answer to the mute inquiry of my eyes, sat on the side of the bed, and took my wasted hand in hers, and told me how the boat was dashed to pieces against the end of the pier, and how Robert and the two others were stunned by the shock and sank instantly, only to be picked up two days later bruised and dead on the rocks of St. Brelade's, while I, by a miracle, was carried past the pier-head and into the harbour, which was full of great breakers rolling over each other through the narrow mouth and heaping up in white mountains of foam inside.

"I heard her voice tremble as she told me how my senseless body was flung four times on the beach and four times dragged back again by the hungry under-tow, but I did not learn from her how I was saved at last. It

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was Lorette who told me the next day how Marget, when my body came back for the fifth time, knotted a light line round her waist, and, shaming the men in the strength and daring of her love, flung herself into the surf and clasped her strong arms about me, holding me in an embrace that the cruel sea itself could not tear loose, and so was dragged ashore with me back from death into life again.

"Later on, as I lay in the sun on the bluff above the harbour, slowly getting strong again, I thought of all this, and marvelled at the strength of the love that could nerve a woman to such a deed as that, and then, like a dark wall between this love and the life that it should have blessed, rose the memory of the vow that I had pledged to my dead brother out yonder on the dark stormy sea the last time that our hands had met this side of the grave. How could I keep that oath as it was written in the Book of God and marry Marget? No half-keeping would do, for if the sea had not spared me to keep it fully and with a whole heart, why did I, of all the four that went out that fatal day, come back alive?

"When I was strong enough to get to work again I was strong enough also to keep my vow, and so one day I took Marget up the glen for one of our walks, and told her of the promise that lay between us, dividing her life from mine through the long years that I had sworn to succour and cherish those whom my brother had commended helpless to my hands.

"I did not insult her with the mockery of releasing her from her promise to me. I knew that our love was given and taken for good and all, and only He who had put it into our hearts could take it out again. Like the brave, true girl that she was, Marget saw the path of duty lying before me as plainly as I did, and told me with her hands on my shoulders and her sweet eyes brimming over with tears, as she spoke the death-sentence of her life's happiness and all the hopes and longings that had grown up with her growth, that only one thing could kill the love that she had for me, and that would be the baseness of breaking such a promise as mine.

And when she had told me this she put up her face to mine and said:

"'Kiss me now, Jean, for the last time, and tell me that you will be faithful to Lorette and her little ones, for in the sight of Heaven your life belongs to them henceforth.'

"Then I stooped down, and with my heart almost breaking for sorrow, sealed on her lips the oath that I had taken in the presence of death, and which she had bidden me keep at the cost of all that made life sweet to her.

"So we parted as lovers, henceforth to meet only as friends with our love buried deep in our hearts—never, so far as we could see, to bear the fruit of which it should have been the seed.

"Thus it came about that I took up my abode with Lorette and her little son and new-born daughter, to devote to them the life that I had given. Lorette, like the kind, brave soul that she was, made many entreaties that I should leave her and go to Marget; but when Marget told her at last that if I did so she would turn her back on me for ever, she saw that my course was fixed and said no more.

"From then the slow years dragged on, and we each went our way apart with unclasped hands—we who had all our lives longed for the time when we should clasp them so fast that only death should loose them again. Of course, at first the neighbours wondered; but when they knew, they were silent and respected our unseen sorrow, and no stranger in Grève de Lecq would have suspected that a tragedy was being played out beneath the calm surface of our simple lives.

"But at last, after nearly five years, the wound was torn open again, and all the work of patience and endurance undone in a few hours of mad regret. It happened in this wise.

"Marget and her mother were very poor, for all they had to live on was what they could earn between them at net-making, and when the mother lost the use of her hands through rheumatism, Margaret could barely make enough to find them in food. We fisher-folk were all very poor in those times, and only won a hard living from the sea at the best; so though we helped each other as we could, the help did not amount to very much. Now, there was living at St. John's, a mile or so inland from Grève de Lecq, a young farmer so well-to-do that, compared with us, he was rich, and he had loved Marget for years, but had never spoken his heart to her, for he and I were friends, and he respected my older right. But now as the years slipped by and she and I still went our ways apart, he began to hope again, and at last came to me like an honest man as he was, to have the truth from me.

"No words can say what it cost me to tell him that Marget and I had long since given up all idea of marriage, and to bid him God-speed in his suit with her. Yet God gave me strength to do it, and, more than that, to plead with Marget herself for him, and ask her, for the sake of her poor old mother and for the sake of her own young life that she was wasting, to say 'Yes' to Maurice Guerin's question if she could.

"She listened, and, after much sorrowful heart-proving, she said 'Yes' to him and 'Farewell' to me.

"Then the tightened chain of my endurance broke, and when she left me to go to him, I cast myself to the earth and prayed that the hand of the dead might be taken off my heart, or else that it might close upon it and chill it to death in its grip.

"Even as I spoke it in my bitter despair, my unrighteous prayer was answered, for, as I returned to the cottage, Robert's little girl ran out towards me, screaming out that her mother had fallen down dead. I rushed into the room and found Lorette lying on the floor, with her hand clasped to her heart, and just breathing. When I raised her head and asked what had happened, she summoned strength enough to whisper, 'It's my heart. I have had pains there often. Something seems to have broken. You and Marget will take the children, won't you?'

"Then her head fell on my shoulder, and Robert was no more alone in heaven. As soon as she was buried I went to Maurice Guerin, and told him the story of my promise and its fulfilment, and asked him to stand aside for me as I had stood aside for him.

"Poor fellow, he was to have been married in a month from then, but when he knew all he took me by the hand and said:

"'If that is so, who am I that I should compare with you in her eyes? You have served for her better than Jacob did for Rachel. Take her, and may the good God bless you both as you have deserved of him.'

"And so as Lorette's grave closed over her the shadows parted, and the light that had been quenched in the sea sprang up again and will shine until the shadows close once more, and the cup of Marget's life or mine shall be full."

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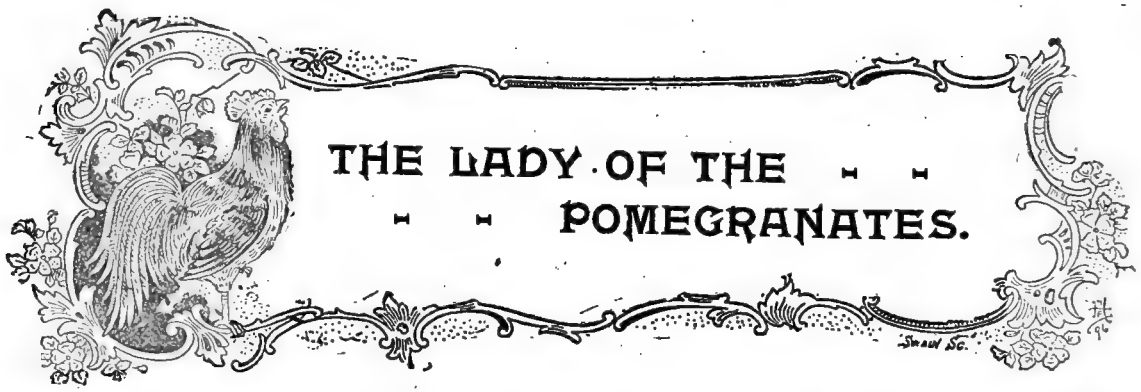

THE LADY OF THE POMEGRANATES.

I WAS preparing for my final examination at college, when I received an extraordinary visitation which affected my whole life and gained for me my wife, whom I love most devotedly.

Early in life it was noticed that my mind had a remarkable philosophical and scientific tendency, and I was educated with a view to a life of study. I was particularly attracted by all psychical phenomena, and even in my schooldays I became convinced that there was an element governing our lives of which we know not the first principle. I believed that there were real manifestations of an unknown power in the universe, one that was as truly and simply ruled by fixed laws as are the phenomena of physics and chemistry.

By the time I first went to college I had already attained a distinction as an experimental scientist, and of course I continued my efforts in the same direction. I may say, without appearing conceited, that I gained honours which far exceeded those of former collegians, and soon became the pet lion of the faculty.

Often as I compared our present attainment with what was known in the time of Roger Bacon, I became more and more impressed with the fact that his theories had also been looked upon as far beyond the possibility of human existence, and he was believed to be a disciple of the evil one. My own theories gained no better reception from the world. And yet Roger Bacon had opened the way to the mysteries of nature, which were now as simple and plain as the transition from daylight to darkness. I fancied myself as standing in about the same relation to our era, and believed my theories would lead to revelations even greater than those of this pioneer investigator.

I had experienced a theory that the soul was a natural composition capable of being experimented with as truly as the atmosphere or water. I also believed that communication between persons separated by the greatest distance would in some simple way be attained and regulated as readily as our voices are now carried by the telephone.

I had read all that had been written by the scientists of France and Germany, and I felt that the time was not far distant when their gropings would be rewarded by discoveries in the realm of psychical phenomena and open an entirely new era in scientific research. I was a militant member of many psychical societies, and examined the realm of ghost lore, with a mind freed from the superstitious fear that has ever been an obstacle to seekers for truth.

I was left an orphan in the hands of an honest and capable board of trustees, who managed my immense fortune. I had no near relatives and no taste for society. I was entirely free, and resolved to devote my life to the investigation of the so-called "occult" phenomena, which I was confident I would show to the world were as clearly regulated by laws as the principles of hydraulics or pneumatics.

At all events, I had resolved that my final thesis should be a discussion of strange future possibilities that would certainly command attention, and announce my intended line of research.

I was at work upon this paper one afternoon in my study, when I had an extraordinary experience. I had written for a long time when I seated myself comfortably to think my way to a clearer expression. In a few seconds I saw the door slowly open, and a woman of great beauty stood before me, with a shining branch of pomegranate in her hand.

She advanced and placed it on the desk, and I quickly arose from the chair, amazed and startled. She turned, looking at me with appealing eyes, and departed.

I saw the door close as she went, and followed in great haste down the corridor, but could see no one.

Then I returned and found the branch. I examined it closely and saw at once it was a product that could not grow in this latitude. It was certainly a real substance, for I could handle it and feel it. The fresh green foliage and reddish-yellow fruit were real entities. I cut a piece of the fruit and saw the brilliant scarlet of the seed and pulp.

Then my mind reverted to the bearer and I remembered every detail of her appearance. I was powerfully moved by the fact that she was beautiful; and it seemed strange, for I had paid but little attention to the beauty or plainness of women. Why, I wondered, should I be so impressed by the exquisite grace and sweetness of my strange visitor?

Nothing about her had escaped me, yet her coming and going could not have occupied more than a moment of time. She was fair, and her head bore a luxurious growth of golden hair; her hands were finely shaped, and her form slender and perfect in contour. Her carriage expressed a subtle grace as natural as it was rare.

Her dress I recalled with equal minuteness. It was, certainly not adapted to an April morning in England. It was more suited to the hottest of summer days. I also noticed that while her complexion had been so fair, she had lustrous eyes of deepest black. I pondered on this fact as showing that she was of foreign origin.

During the days following this event I did not seem myself. Indeed, I began to fear that I should never again

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go about my studies as contented as I had been. I constantly found myself dreaming of this daylight apparition—for apparition I became convinced it was I made an effort to do my work, but my mind could not be stayed from wandering, and I had difficulty in commanding the concentration to do the work at hand, while nothing of original research was accomplished.

I made inquiries of many persons, but no one had been seen to answer my description, the nature of which always aroused curiosity. Useless as I felt it to be I investigated every clue that might prove I had received a genuine guest.

But the Lady of the Pomegranates had not been seen.

One night, a month after this experience, I spent a long evening in the room of one of the professors, with whom I was on good terms. I told him my story, and when I had finished I showed him the branch of pomegranate of which I had taken the greatest care. He examined it so closely that I knew at once he was really interested. He said it could not have been produced except in the warmer latitudes, and asked if he might show a bit of it to a botanist. I reluctantly consented.

As kindly and gently as possible, he told me that he believed I was influenced by the mood brought on by the writing I had been doing. I was under considerable stress, he explained, and he could easily understand that my fatigue and nervousness had been the cause of this phantom of my mind. But by the branch of pomegranate he admitted he was mystified. He had no theory for this. Probably some perfectly natural and explainable means had brought it to my room. Quite likely it had been intended as a joke by some of the students.

I, of course, did not accept his opinion that my visitor was a passing phantasy of my mind. I daily became more strongly entrenched in the conviction that I was on the eve of events which would affect my life. But I found myself obliged to adopt the "rest cure" upon which he insisted, or he would have taken strong measures. In a few days I was informed that the botanist had discovered the branch to belong to a rare species of pomegranate, which grew only in warm latitudes, and generally along the north-eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

A month's stay in a quiet village soothed and rested my shaken nerves, but more truly was I grounded in the faith that the woman I had seen I should see again. My mind was fully made up as to my movements when I had finished my university career.

I was bound to realise that my whole life was wrapped up in this woman, and that I was deeply in love with one of whom I knew nothing. To find her was to be the fulfilment of my whole existence. Out into the world I determined to go and search until I had found her, even if it required a lifetime. My dear old friend, the professor, was pained by the calm and determined manner in which I spoke. He told me flatly that I had become a monomaniac, as insane on this subject as others are on all things. But, except in this, he regarded me as sound, and would not interfere to restrain me.

My real purpose was to be able to meet the woman I loved in a style suited to her rank.

At the earliest moment I set out for Rome, where I intended to stay first. I set up a household that astonished the good people, and I replaced my valet by an Italian, one who had served an old count of one of the oldest houses in Italy. The old man's estate had depreciated so that he was obliged to relinquish his household and live in retirement on a small pittance. It will appear later that the change was a most fortunate event.

My method of procedure proved even better than I had expected. I found that palaces and villas, castles and châteaux, opened their doors wide for me on production of my letters of introduction, and my progress was almost impeded by the necessity of remaining several days at each one as a guest of honour. For I was convinced that the woman I sought was of noble birth, and must be sought among the highest classes.

As I needed time to make a thorough examination of all the noble families, I was not disturbed by the delay.

I posed as an Englishman of wealth and education desiring to see and know the Italians and their country, but in all the attention I was accorded I gained no pleasure. A restless impatience possessed me, and grew upon me each day. It required a greater effort to appear interested in my entertainers, and I grew to fear the strain would cause me to break down.

Another fear possessed me and made me long to make more progress in my quest. I knew I had left the professor of psychology the sole possesser of my secret. He could not fail to be impressed by what he read of me in the papers, and should he tell the true cause of my extravagance, I felt that my scheme would be spoilt.

For six months I travelled, without making any apparent progress. My faith was by no means weakened, and I was about to turn from Italy to Spain when an incident of the merest triviality held me back.

I have said that my valet had once served an Italian count whose financial condition had driven him to the most humiliating economies. I had listened to several recitals from my servant on this man's character. He was an entertaining talker, and I fancied I was always a hero to my valet. I, however, interested myself but little in his affairs, until I was told that his whole *entourage* was to be laid under the hammer by a forced sale. The many financial embarrassments with which the estate was encumbered, demanded an immediate settlement, and the poor nobleman was now obliged to part with all, leaving him nothing but his title. My valet probably supposed it would be a mere bagatelle for me to buy up the property, and at last persuaded me to inspect it.

The villa and demesne were only twenty miles from Florence. The aged count and his family had retired to a humble Swiss chalet near Lucerne, which had served as a simple summer residence. We set out in considerable state, driving our own carriage, passing through a most delightful country. I had never seen anything in nature so surpassingly lovely, and the experience appealed most gratefully to my senses. Before we reached the villa I was possessed with a wild desire to own it.

The estate was one of the finest in Italy, and I could never understand how the family had met with such reverses. The building dated from the middle of the Renaissance, and was erected in the best style of that time. It was a most superb pile and its harmony and poetry were entrancing. In the court was one of those magnificent Italian gardens, to which antiquity has added an unspeakable glory and which is sanctified by the care of generations of devoted gardeners.

There was a presence here which overwhelmed me with peace and happiness. It followed me through the vast corridors and endless suites of chambers, each

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supremely elegant with the artistic taste of the greatest Italian decorators. What is it, I asked myself, that thrills me so? What power renders me so blissful here, and so far from my quest?

I sat for a long time on a balcony overlooking the serene inner court in the afternoon light, whence came a soothing perfume from myriads of flowers and shrubs nodding in the spray of the fountains. Something attracted my attention. I looked and saw—the fresh green and glowing fruit of the pomegranate!

Surely, I thought, I have been here before. I have seen that. Is it, can it be the property of my love, the "Lady of the Pomegranates?"

I hastened to the garden, and my valet, noticing my white face, asked if I were ill. But I paid no attention, nor stopped until I had reached the spot and had a branch in my hands.

Forgetful of the presence of another, I kissed it tenderly and rapturously. It was the same that my botanist had said was so rare. But my valet would know, and I asked him in great excitement.

Amazed at my excited manner, he told me its interesting history. It was one of the prized possessions of the villa. It had survived in the garden for three hundred years, but it seldom flourished unless there was a daughter of great beauty in the existing generation.

It was a singular fact in the family history that now and then a daughter would be born gifted with great beauty and attainments. This had happened three times during the past three hundred years, and it was observed that there was a strong resemblance, as, he said, one could see by the paintings. The lives of these women had been most remarkable. They had married out of their own country, and to their inferiors in rank. The pomegranate possessed a strange connection with these daughters of the noble house, and their births were heralded by its freshening growth and the subsequent blossom. It was always carefully tended by the maiden herself, and seemed almost to be conscious of her presence.

At the time of the wedding its growth was most luxurious, and it served as the chief decoration of the villa.

The first of these three countesses had married a Spanish planter, the second a Mexican. By each a branch had been taken away, and had lived and thrived in new lands.

I could hardly maintain my composure when my servant continued. The present daughter of the count bore a striking resemblance to her two famous ancestresses, and, as the pomegranate had begun to revive during the past few years, it was believed that she was fated to the same peculiar destiny. It was the great sorrow of the count, to whom the daughter was the only comfort.

Vain endeavours had been made to persuade the girl to accept the hand of one of her many lovers among the Italian nobility. She had declined, affirming her belief in the family tradition, and insisting that she did not love them.

My amazement at this recital can be imagined. I now understood the influence I had felt throughout the day. Then the portrait gallery came to my mind, and I eagerly asked where it was, for I had passed none in my rounds. I was told it was locked, as the pictures had not been removed, and the count was obdurate in his determination that no one should see it.

My disappointment was plainly visible to the servants and agent of the count. My suspense was indescribable. I had one resource, however, which I felt would bring me into the presence of her who I knew was destined to be my wife. I informed the agent that I would buy the property, but that I was extremely particular in all my business transactions, and I did not wish to make the purchase through any intermediary. My one condition was that we should make a personal exchange of documents. I made the agent understand that he would not suffer pecuniarily.

In order to be able to start as soon as possible for the Swiss chalet at Lucerne, I gave the agent three days for an answer to my ultimatum. The count had always entertained a dislike of Englishmen, but he was not his own master and his creditors made him submit to my conditions.

We set forth in great state. My valet was almost as radiant as I in the expectation of again seeing his beloved master.

Assured as I was by my belief that no earthly power could keep us long apart, I yet took every precaution that there should be no unnecessary delay. My greatest obstacle was the father's prejudice for my nationality. Thus I had arranged to take him by surprise, and had purposely left the day of my appearance a matter limited to ten days.

The ruse was successful. I called at the count's chalet before sending my horses to an hotel, and was told that the count was out. My handsome outfit made its impression, however, and I was invited to alight, enter, and wait his arrival.

I had hardly entered the house when I again perceived the delicious atmosphere of my affinity. I had scarcely been in the modest drawing-room ten minutes before the mystic power of our two personalities brought us together.

I was as certain she would enter as I should be to expect to see a friend in London when calling at her home. During our wedded life, I have studied this psychical instance carefully. I have also endeavoured to explain the material reality of the pomegranates I saw first. But although I have been baffled so far, I shall in time add the explanation of this to my many other marvellous discoveries in psychical science.

I heard footsteps, and turned toward the door. It opened, and the young countess entered as she had that day in April. There she stood, the same person I had seen, breathing and real. I advanced to meet her. She came to meet me at once, placed her hands upon my shoulders, and raised her lips to mine before a word had been spoken.

Then in a few words it was all explained, and we talked and chatted as naturally as if we had know each other always. We could not have been two more perfectly blended personalities if we had known each other from childhood.

We knew each other's faces. She first saw mine, she said, one day during last April, when on gathering a branch of pomegranates, she seated herself on the same balcony where I had first seen the tree. With eyes wide open, she had seen me in my study, and placed the branch at my side. When she awakened from her reverie, the pomegranates were nowhere to be found.

We heard the count's footstep, and he stood before the door. I shall never forget his face; it was such a study of misery and disgust.

But my wife said: "Father, dear, he whom I have expected has come at last, and you are saved, and we are happy."

S. E. Johnson.

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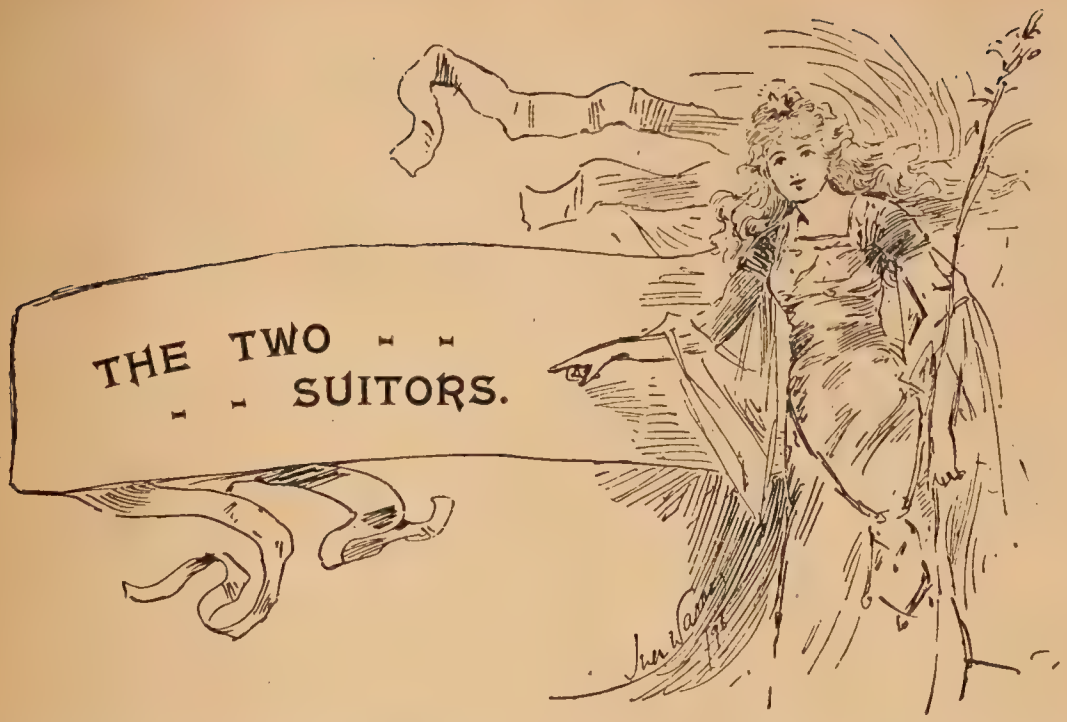

THE TWO SUITORS.

All through that long July day, as Emily Howland paced backwards and forwards across the schoolroom floor, hot, weary, and worn, the tall mansion of Squire Morrison loomed up before her eyes.

In the distance it seemed cool, inviting, and sweet, its white sides gleaming out from the shadows of stately oaks and elms. She could see the network of gravelled paths cross and recross the spacious grounds, the blossoming shrubs dotted about here and there, and once in a while catch a glimpse of little Gertie Morrison as she walked beneath the trees.

A flush, something very like pride, rose to her cheek at the thought that, if she so willed, it might be all her own. She was nothing but a poor girl; a poor, proud girl, perhaps I should say, teaching from day to day to earn the bread she ate and the clothes she wore. Her father lived on a stony, poverty-stricken patch of land two or three miles from the village, just managing, the year through, to keep his family from starving.

Emily, by dint of hard, persevering study, had scraped together knowledge enough to teach in the village school.

Mentally, she found breathing space, and from a shy, reticent, almost stupid girl, grew to a dignified, thoughtful young woman. Comely, too, in looks, with clear, dark face, well-defined features, and sunny brown hair, and a straight, well-rounded figure.

Looking over her life, as she did repeatedly that day, it is not to be wondered at that the girl's eyes brightened and her cheeks flushed hotly, thinking of the conquest she had made; for Squire Morrison, who had asked her to be his wife, was the wealthiest man in the village, nay, in the whole county, and dozens of young ladies would have gladly become mistress of his home, if not his heart.

That night the Squire was coming for his answer. In her heart she had no love for him; her pride and vanity alone were touched, but the better part of her nature was not gladdened or warmed. She was weary; this man could give her rest. Her people were poor, very poor; if she became his wife, her purse would be well filled. Her brothers and sisters were growing up ignorant and uneducated; here was a chance close at hand whereby she might give them aid.

On the other side—and her breath came in quick, short gasps, while thinking of it—she had a lover, in every way her equal; a young man with brown face and hands, 'tis true, but brave, manly, and thoroughly devoted to her.

She thought of the two homes that were offered to her. In one she could sit in white-handed ease, dressed in silks, jewels, and laces, her carriages and servants at her command.

She could have books to read without stint, pictures to look upon, velvet carpets upon which to walk, and, more than all—and she tried hard to make herself believe that this was the paramount thought—she could help her poor people at home!

In the weather-stained house, with its three or four rooms, she should have—well, first of all, Mark, dear, good, true Mark—but there would be floors to scrub, dishes to wash, paint to keep clean, and Monday's washing to do. No fine dresses there; no luxury nor ease; but close economy, a little better than that which she had known perhaps, but still close, for Mark had his widowed mother to take care of. No help for the boys and girls at home, nothing beyond bread and meat, if they were starving.

So she went over the ground, times without number, sometimes determining, with a firm-set mouth, to become mistress of the fine mansion, and then again vowing to cling to Mark's love, no matter what

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temptations rose in her path. At last the first class stood up to spell, and, walking up and down before it, book in hand, Emily almost forgot where she was. A shadow fell across the open door, and, looking up, she saw Mark Browne, dressed in his Sunday suit, his forefinger pressed roguishly upon his lip.

"It has been a hard day for you," he said later, looking into her feverish face, while the noisy group bounded out of doors at the welcome word "dismissed."

"Yes," with a little sigh.

"Sit here," he said, placing her a chair. "while I get your hat and jacket. I wish I had a carriage to take you home in."

"A carriage," she repeated, smiling that he should strike the tenor of her thoughts so perfectly. "I wish so, too, Mark."

His handsome face lengthened a little.

"It will all come in good time, Emily," he said hopefully, caressing her glossy brown hair. "If I haven't that, I can save you a little labour by fastening the windows, locking your desk, and afterwards — why, here's my arm to lean upon as we take the cross-cut home."

"You are so good, Mark."

This to him in a low, earnest voice, and yet to herself a great deal more.

"What is it, Em? Has anything unusual occurred? You speak so oddly."

"Do I?" quite ignoring the question, and turning her head that he might not see the blush that rose to her cheeks. "You've been having a holiday?" she added quickly, taking her hat from his hand.

"Yes; as we walk across the field I'll tell you about it. But now let me say that, for some reason, I cannot tell what, you have not been out of my mind five minutes to-day."

She started and looked up nervously into his face. Did he know, had he heard of the Squire's proposal?

"To tell the truth, Emily, I think you've passed enough of your time in this school," he said, turning the key in the lock. "Mother is getting old, and the old house is lonely; it needs some one younger to look after it, and I think you'd better give up teaching and come home this autumn."

Her heart fluttered strangely. Their path, winding across the green field, was nearing a rise in the ground that overlooked Squire Morrison's house and grounds. East of it Mark's brown cottage lay, small, poor, and insignificant.

"Isn't it lovely?" she exclaimed.

"I think it can easily be made so," his eyes lighting up as he spoke.

"Oh!" said Emily.

The young man looked inquiringly into her face.

"I was speaking of Squire Morrison's."

He was silent for a little, and then said, as he bent down to snatch up a handful of ox-eyed daisies:

"It has everything to make it beautiful, but I'd sooner be Mark Browne in the poorest hut than the Squire in all his luxury!"

"You would?"

"I would, and wouldn't you, Em?"

"I don't know. I think, just now, Mark, I'd like a little taste of wealth and refinement, as a change."

"Refinement and wealth do not always go in pairs," he said impulsively.

Again there was a silence.

Mark walked along with his eyes bent upon the ground. Emily studied his face eagerly, the clear, honest face with its bright, hopeful look a little subdued now.

Should she tell him, then and there, of what she had been thinking that day?

Would he care for her when he knew that she stood, like an idle woman at her shopping, comparing his love—rich, great, and true—with a glittering, vain show that the years would leave a miserable ruin at her feet? No, she would give herself a little further time; she would warm herself in the sunshine of this man's heart a little longer, and then, if duty to herself and her family demanded that she should turn from him, she would never, never look back again.

"You have something to tell me," she said, to change the subject.

"I had quite forgotten it, and now it seems hardly worth noticing. It's nothing; only I went over to Archer to-day."

"And got your photograph? Oh! Mark, I'm so glad!"

Her face was all aglow, and the young man, not comprehending her mood, looked at her wonderingly.

"You are nervous," he said, placing the little proof-picture in her outstretched hand.

"It isn't quite you, Mark; these likenesses never quite satisfy one, you know. Nevertheless, I'm very glad to get this," she added quickly, seeing that his face wore a serious look.

"Yes, I know, Em."

"Do you know, Mark, that I think you ought to have been an artist?"

"If I ought to have been, or ought to be, shall be," he said confidently. "I am young yet, and our talents won't bury themselves. It'll all come about in God's good time. We will do the best we can, and wait."

"If one can only wait patiently," she sighed.

"Two can, if one cannot. We are very strong together, Emily. Love gives everybody strength. If I hadn't you I should be hopeless at times, and should not care which way the world went."

While he said this she was plucking at the night-green moss which clung to the roots of the old trees. She almost wished for the moment that he did not love her quite so well. It would be so hard to break from him. It would wreck and blacken his whole life. The sound of carriage wheels aroused her. She started up, knowing, intuitively, what presence was nearing them.

"I ought to go home; I have an engagement to-night."

She did not mean to say this, but it escaped from her in the moment's confusion.

"An engagement?" wonderingly.

It was an odd thing for Emily to speak of engagements. He did not question her, but rose to his feet, saying something about going after pond lilies with the boys.

Just then Squire Morrison whirled by. He lifted his hat with his white hand as he passed. A deep blush overspread the girl's face, but she did not look at Mark.

"It's late to go on the pond," she said, trying to speak indifferently. "I believe I can see a cloud through the trees—don't go to-night."

"I shall go," in a low tone.

"Well, then, good-bye; you must not accompany me any farther."

"Good-bye!" just touching her fingers, and turning from her down the path.

She did not move from the spot where she was standing. Her heart grew heavy as lead. When should she

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see him again? How would they meet after that hour?

"Mark, dear Mark!" she cried, springing after him.

"What is it, Emily?" coming sedately back to her.

"Nothing, nothing, only don't go in that way—say good-night better. I love you, Mark!"

He held her face for a minute tenderly between his hands and looked down into her wet eyes.

"Good-night, my darling! God keep you! Good-night!"

The storm rolled up black and heavy from the west, but it did not detain Squire Morrison at home. Carefully dressed, cane in hand, he went down the village street to the cottage where Emily Howland was living with an old couple.

She sat in her room watching the inky cloud with feverish anxiety and peering into the gathering darkness towards the pond that lay south of the village. Just as the fury of the cloud burst in wind and rain, shaking at the windows, flinging back shutters spitefully, and carrying great blinding clouds of dust before it, her middle-aged, aristocratic suitor gained the house.

"If he were only in Mark's place," she thought, little knowing the substance of her wish.

"The storm is fearful," he said, taking her cold hand and leading her courteously to a seat.

There was a protecting tenderness in his manner that touched her. She looked up into his face, hardly knowing what she was doing, and then dropped her eyes timidly before him. The man of the world was charmed.

She was trying to read his heart, he thought, and he had got a glimpse of her beautiful eyes.

He talked soothingly to her in a gentle, well-modulated voice, never once alluding to the subject which was uppermost in his mind, until the wind lulled away to a whisper, and there was a glimmer of light in the west. Then he said, taking her hand—

"Have you decided—will you be my wife, Emily?"

She had been sitting quietly beside him, her white face half turned from his gaze—going over the old ground again, weighing his wealth and position with the priceless treasure of Mark Browne's love. Things seemed terribly mixed to her; there was a dim mist floating before her eyes, and she was like one in a dream. His question, like a sharp blade, divided the darkness before her, and meeting the swift light she started to her feet. Squire Morrison looked at the transfigured face in wonder, almost in awe.

"What is it?" he asked, trying to arrest her eager gaze, which was fixed on something above and beyond him.

"Forgive me, sir," she said, sinking down, "but it has come to me—I cannot be your wife."

She was trembling in every limb as she spoke.

"Why?"

She turned her eyes slowly to his face in a way that startled him, and said, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, yet clear and distinct:

"Because I love Mark Browne, and do not love you. In God's sight I am his wife."

Just then there was a confused murmur of voices in the street. It came nearer—crying, moaning and lamenting. The Squire flung back the shutters. Three men were carry a burden, followed by a little crowd of men, women and children.

At that moment a saffron light shot out from the west, showing the white, dead face of Mark Browne.

"Drowned in the pond when the storm first broke. He was out after lilies," a voice said.

And they passed on.

S. Ardley.

A - TIP-TOP - MAGAZINE.

PEARSON'S FOR SEPTEMBER IS A BRILLIANT ISSUE.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE for September is an unusually brilliant issue. It is crammed with interesting articles, stories to suit every taste, and illustrations and photographs such as can be found in no other Magazine published. It is a tip-top issue.

The following table of contents speaks for itself:

PICTURES AND THEIR PAINTERS. (Illustrated). Here is some bright art gossip, illustrated with photographs of beautiful pictures, superbly printed.

SNOWED-UP IN JUNE. By John S. Begg. (Illustrated).—All about the observatory on the summit of Ben Nevis, about the strange phenomena there to be seen, and about the arctic weather experienced even at mid-summer.

SIGNORS OF THE NIGHT. By Max Pemberton. (Illustrated).—The fiction element begins with another of Mr. Max Pemberton's brilliant stories, under this general title. This is a vividly written, powerfully descriptive story of old Venice, for the sake of which alone the Magazine is worth procuring.

FROM READING TO PARIS IN A HOUSE-BOAT. By Walton Adams. (Illustrated).—Describing how a journey was made from Reading to Paris in a House-boat, a wonderful voyage of adventure occupying three weeks.

THE LAST OF THE BORGIAS. By Fred M. White. (Illustrated).—A wonderful story, one of the series describing the strange history of Victor Colonna, Professor of Science, and his experiments in the lost art of poisoning.

LIQUID AIR. By Charles E. Tripler. (Illustrated).—Mr. Tripler, the famous American scientist, gives in this article the first authentic account published in this country of the marvellous manner in which he can liquefy air. The photographs explain at a glance the wonderful properties of this new liquid and the revolutionising effects of its application to every-day life. Liquid air is the newest wonder of science. The extraordinary account of its properties reads like a story of magic.

MOTHER BUNCH. By Edwin Pugh. A bright story. The love-making of old Mother Bunch, a workhouse inmate, affords excellent and amusing reading.

OURSELVES *versus* THE WORLD. By J. Holt Schooling. (Illustrated).—One of the most interesting of Mr. Holt Schooling's well-known statistical articles. It will make you proud to read how nobly the old British Lion holds his own against the world.

THE VICOMTE'S DOUBLE. By E. W. Jennings. (Illustrated).—Another powerful story, written in an inimitable style which will appeal to all.

HOW CRIMINALS ARE IDENTIFIED. By Tighe Hopkins. (Illustrated).—In this article there is an extremely interesting account of the Bertillon System and its introduction into England. It is illustrated with photographs specially taken in Wormwood Scrubbs, showing how all possibility of error in identifying criminals is eliminated by the use of the system.

LIFE'S LITTLE WORRIES. By W. L. Alden. (Illustrated).—In this feature the well-known humorist continues his philosophical thoughts, dealing with telephones, chests of drawers, and clocks; little worries all have experienced.

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN KETTLE. By Cutcliffe Hyne. (Illustrated).—A more exciting half-hour's reading than is afforded by this marvellous adventure of Captain Kettle cannot be imagined. The intrepid little Captain's deeds have attracted such attention that they need no further recommendations here, suffice it to say that no one will be disappointed in the expectations which Mr. Hyne's stories always arouse.

WIRE WALKING. By Austin Fryers. (Illustrated).—A description of some marvellous feats on the tight-rope, illustrated with photographs which will fairly take your breath away.

GOD AND THE PAGAN. By W. A. Fraser. (Illustrated).—With this powerful story, last, but not least, this September Number of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE comes to an end. It will be acknowledged that it would be a hard matter to bring together a better collection of stories, articles, and illustrations.

SEPTEMBER, 1898. ***PRICE SIXPENCE.***

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Professor Winthorne's Prodigy.

For over thirty years, I, Professor Amos Winthorne have directed and superintended Bridgely College to the best of my ability. More properly speaking, perhaps, my prosperous institution should be designated as Bridgely School, for I regret to say that I possess no authority whatsoever to apply to my house of learning the pompous affix by which it is generally known. My boys, however, are prepared for college, and I can affirm with a just pride that many of the most brilliant and prominent men of England have been pupils at my school before passing through Cambridge or Oxford with honours due in some respect to my untiring efforts in their behalf.

The number of my pupils at no period was less than thirty, and in busy years fifty and more. I took personal charge of the higher classes, and was assisted in the discharge of my duties by two experienced teachers, also by Miss Atherstone, my niece, who directed the primary department with a discerning tact that I cannot too highly praise. The pupils under her care varied in age from five to ten years, and occasionally I examined them myself, and when I noticed that some individual child was particularly bright, and gave promise of future excellence, I invariably would make him an object of special study, and then, after a short time, if I discovered that his intellect was of a stronger calibre than that of his lit le comrades, I would place him in a higher class even be ore the close of the school term.

French and German were taught my boys by Professor Dupré, while Professor Henderson, a celebrated Hellenist, gave instruction in the classics. The higher English branches, mathematics, elocution, etc., fell to my charge, as well as the class in botany, while Spanish and Italian were also taught by competent instructors.

Bridgely Hall was in reality more of a pleasant home than a school because, while attending to the mental welfare of my pupils, I likewise heeded their many juvenile desires with parental affection. All of us lived quite *en famille*, and my reputation for leniency seemed to check all ideas of license and mischievousness among them, for a more properly behaved set of youngsters I have rarely seen. I endeavoured to be just and kind, rarely scolded, and, in fact, had little reason to do so, for my pupils loved and respected me, appreciated my tender feelings towards them, and recompensed me with zealous endeavours to improve.

One pleasant afternoon in April, as I was enjoying a favourite meerschaum in my study, the servant handed me a card, saying that a gentleman and his little boy were waiting to see me in the library. I glanced at the card, on which was engraved in heavy Gothic characters:

"James Sanderson, Barrister, London."

"A new pupil, perchance," I murmured.

"Oh, he's a wee darling, sir," said the servant. "He has butter-coloured hair, and doesn't speak English. I never heard the like of how he talks. He's French I think, sir."

"Very well, Mary, I will be down in a moment."

Inwardly congratulating myself that the renown of the school had crossed the Channel, and totally forgetting the indisputable proof of Caledonian origin in the gentleman's name, I hastily slipped off my loose coat and, attiring myself in scholastic black, slowly descended the stairway, and, with an expression which I knew to to be urbane in spite of studied efforts to make it appear severe, I entered the parlour.

Mr. Sanderson was standing near the table in the middle of the room, turning the leaves of an album containing photographs of my former pupils. At a glance I knew him to be a gentleman. He was fully six feet in height, with closely shaven cheeks, dull grey eyes, and an intelligent forehead.

He was faultlessly dressed, but there was something in his appearance which suggested the sporting man. His son was employed playing marbles on the carpet. He was a fair, rosy litttle fellow with a slight squint, which was by no means a deformity, and which lent variety to his chubby features, He was dressed in a blue jacket, and his yellow hair had been pomatumed into a preposterous top-knot. He picked up his marbles and leered at me.

"Good afternoon, Professor," said Mr. Sanderson. "I have heard a great deal about your school—I, ahem! beg pardon—Bridgely College, and the praise bestowed upon it by my friends has induced me to bring my son to you. I have read your prospectus; the terms and the locality suit me exactly. I am not, I admit, what the world would call a wealthy man, and I have been seeking a cheap establishment of this kind for some time."

This last remark wounded my feelings, and I could not refrain from observing; "Mr. Sanderson, the invariable price for a pupil under ten years of age at Bridgely is two hundred pounds per annum, and I cannot agree with you in regard to its inexpensiveness."

"Oh," he ejaculated, rapidly. "Beg your pardon, Professor, you misunderstand me, by Jove, you know! I didn't wish to make any allusion to—to, let me see Dotheboys Hall and old Squeers. Lord, no! Everything here is stunning." And so saying, he began toying with my album. I perceived nevertheless, that his vulgar apology was tinged with irony; I knew it by the look in his dull eyes.

"No excuses necessary, Mr. Sanderson. Has your son had any rudimentary instruction?"

"Oh, very little, but he's a precocious young beggar and needs discipline. I give you *carte blanche* for an occasional flogging when he deserves it."

"But my dear sir," I interrupted. "it is not my habit to flog my pupils. When boys are wayward I endeavour to make them feel ashamed of their bad behaviour, and use gentle persuasion. I prefer to win them by——"

At this moment I received a moist mud pellet full on my cheek, and, turning with rage and mortification, I saw my new pupil in the act of making faces as only a Drury Lane clown could have done.

"No, no!" he yelled, "no cane!"

His father laughed.

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"Excuse Jack," he added, "he's full of fun;" and then turning to the boy, he said:

"You won't be flogged this time, Be a good boy, learn your lessons, and if you get to the top of your class I'll send you half a sovereign a month for toffee—don't cry."

I looked at Jack and saw that he had not the slightest intention of weeping; on the contrary, an expression of ineffable joy pervaded his rosy countenance.

"The child," I remarked, "seems to be advanced for his age. What might that be?"

"He will be seven next July. He was born in France; his mother was a Frenchwoman and Jack speaks the language fluently; English also."

Jack then cried out in infantile glee:

"I speak both admirably."

"Oh, oh," I said, patting him on the cheek. "So young and already vain?"

"The boy knows the alphabet, and reads a bit," said the father; "I hope you'll be able to shape him into something. I am obliged for business reasons to leave England, and, if anything happens, here is my address, and, by the way, Mr. Winthorne, will you kindly excuse me offering you the payment of the first year in advance? I know it is against your rules" (it was not), "but I take this liberty, being uncertain as to the duration of my sojourn abroad."

"Thanks, Mr. Sanderson. I will write you a receipt and assuredly do my best to develop your son's talents."

"Yes, Jack has *decided* talent for such a snip; he takes it from his mother, bright and quick, to the point. Now I will bid you good afternoon, Mr. Winthorne. Good-bye, my child," said Mr. Sanderson. So saying he seized the boy, lifted him to his face, kissed him on both cheeks, interrupting his demonstration of affection by peals of laughter. I could not understand the man. The child stuck out his tongue and roared like a fiend. An hour later he was studying his lessons in the primary department.

About a week after this event my niece entered my study, saying she had something to tell me about the new-comer.

"Has he misbehaved, Miss Atherstone?"

"Oh by no means. He is remarkably quiet and industrious. but from what you have told me I begin to think that Mr. Sanderson has underestimated his son's ability, because I have never met, in my whole experience with such a wonderful scholar."

"Indeed, pray tell me of his powers."

"When on Monday last I gave him two easy lessons in spelling and simple addition, he surprised me by mastering them and the entire multiplication table besides, in one afternoon, and during the week he has made such progress in orthography and geography, that I would like you to examine him yourself. He is head of the class, and keeps the position. You know I am not prone to exaggerate."

"Ah!" I said smiling, "he spells difficult words, does he? What, for instance? *Constantinople?*"

"Indeed he does, and *phthisis, rhythm, parallelogram, scissors, syntax, conchology.*"

"Is it possible? Does he appear to know their meaning?"

"Certainly; and his explanations are very lucid. As for that he is continually poring over the encyclopædia, and his memory is simply prodigious."

"Well, well, I will examine this sucking Webster to morrow."

Upon repairing to the primary the following day, I found that Miss Atherstone had assuredly not exaggerated. In answer to my questions Jack gave a chronological list of the French and English kings with unfaltering precision. I tried him with geography, and he furnished me with the capital of every country I mentioned, occasionally adding several of the most important towns, with their population: and, furthermore, I found to my astonishment when I called Jack to the blackboard that the rule of three had no secrets for him, and in orthography he was unassailable.

Of course such a boy could not remain in this department, and I gave orders for his transfer to the third class, formed of boys from ten to fifteen, and, without losing any time, I wrote to his father, asking as a particular favour the authorisation to take Jack under my personal charge and begin a Latin course. Mr. Sanderson replied that he felt highly honoured, and requested me to direct Jack's studies in the way I deemed most judicious. Forthwith I began the interesting experiment, and Jack seemed delighted to have other opportunities afforded him for advancement, and, at his own solicitation, he entered Mr. Henderson's Greek class, beginning the Latin rudiments with me.

Two months had barely elapsed when the prodigy stood at the head of the third class in French literature, English composition, mathematics, German, and the classics. His progress in Latin was incredible; he would translate Horace and Virgil with the greatest ease, and Greek he had mastered equally well. I at first imagined that he used "cribs," and, aided by his formidable memory, learned his lessons parrotwise, but I was soon undecieved, and began to look upon this strange child as a new "Admirable Crichton," and unexpected honour to my school. He was sent to the second class a few weeks later, and began Spanish and Italian simultaneously.

His method of learning foreign words was curious. He would select from his dictionary about three hundred words and adjectives, copy them on a long slip of paper, and number each word.

He then would read them over twice attentively, and without a mistake recite them all, giving the number likewise.

"What is bird in Spanish?" would ask Señor Alzamora.

"*Pajaro*, masculine, *ave* also. Nos. 8 and 191."

The boy, in spite of his labours, enjoyed good health: he was full of fun and the incarnation of jollity. Of course he was greatly beloved by his comrades, old and young. They looked upon him as a marvel and were even respectful to him. He was perfectly conscious of his phenomenal powers, but was by no means conceited.

Further surprises, however, were in store for me. At the July examinations, Jack carried off all the first prizes in all the branches.

He was as strong in the composition of French and German verses as he was competent in botany, trigonometry, and languages. He would cite from over one hundred authors, but philology was his strongest point.

I wrote once more to Mr. Sanderson asking permission to keep Jack by me during his holidays, as I considered the dear boy one of my family. Mr. Sanderson called in person, and was received by Jack with every demonstration of delight. His father brought him a well-filled

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purse and some rare Italian books he needed, and I left them together. The interview lasted for over an hour, and from my study I could hear outbursts of laughter, Jack's squeaky treble blending with his father's sonorous baritone guffaws.

"A happy reunion, indeed," I murmured.

When the bell rang, Mr. Sanderson reappeared and gave his consent to my proposal. Jack was to stay with me. During the summer vacation the majority of my pupils remained at Bridgely. Those who wished to pursue their studies could attend the morning and evening class, but this was not obligatory. Jack never missed one, and continued to improve in the most miraculous way.

One event occurred during the vacation worthy of notice. I have the well-established reputation of being one of the best Orientalists in England, and had made the study of Eastern languages the chosen occupation of my life. In my study I possessed a valuable collection of manuscripts, grammars, and dictionaries in Sanskrit, Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, Persian, Hindustani, Tamil, etc., and I often sent contributions to our leading reviews on matters appertaining to those languages.

One afternoon, having been suddenly called away from my labours, I left upon my study table an article relating to a disputed passage in the Gulistan, giving what I considered to be the correct translation.

On my return I found, in amazement, on the margin of the article, a totally different rendering of the question, written in Persian, and, worse than that, I was forced to admit that it was the genuine reading, elucidating what had hitherto been obscure to me! Who could have written it?

No one at Bridgely College knew a word of Persian. I acknowledged that I instantly thought of my wonderful boy, but I dismissed the idea with a shrug of incredulity.

However, I resolved to find the key to the mystery, and continued my article, purposely filling it with the most outrageous blunders.

An hour later I found Master Jack correcting them.

"Heavens! this is sorcery! Where did you learn Persian?"

"In your library, Professor, and all the rest, too."

"What! Armenian? Turkish?"

"Yes, sir."

I instantly proceeded to examine him, and, with the first real pang of envy I ever felt in my life, I was forced to admit that the boy spoke the truth. He could converse in seven Eastern languages with Satanic ease.

My envious feeling was of short duration, and, transformed to stammering wonder, I clasped him to my arms, crying:

"My boy, my boy, you are a second Mezzofanti, the greatest living linguist."

"Oh, no, sir!" he exclaimed, disengaging himself violently. "Mezzofanti knew seventy languages; I only know fifteen."

"You will surpass him, my boy; you are the eighth wonder of the world," I cried in rapture. "I will write to Rome, to London, to Paris. I will call a meeting of linguists and philosophers here—*here* at Bridgely *College!* I will make you famous, Jack; you have given me an imperishable fame. You shall learn even more—Dutch, Icelandic, Hungarian, Swedish, Portugese! Think, Jack! Danish, Chinese, Russian!"

I saw him smile faintly when I mentioned Russian.

Deeply impressed by this extraordinary revelation, I immediately proceeded to compose a circular containing all the facts and events I have mentioned in this narration, and lost no time in forwarding it to all the universities and important colleges of Europe, cordially inviting the leaders of literature and science to Bridgely for the purpose of publicly examining my prodigy.

Answers poured in from every portion of the Continent; people flocked to our quiet village from every institution of celebrity, and, in a word, six weeks later Bridgely was crowded with the literary *élite* of Europe.

I will pass briefly over the colossal success of this glorious day. Suffice it to say that Jack passed through the ordeal, grandly, triumphantly, magnificently. The omniscient child, hailed with tumultuous applause after every signal victory, proved his modesty as well as his genius. His powers were tested by grey-haired professors, and with such difficulties that I was exasperated; yet the wonderful child answered them all.

His refutation of Luther in Greek was sublime, and his dissertation proving conclusively that spiritualism was known to the Egyptians, founding his reasons from lately discovered inscriptions on Theban obelisks, was eminently applauded; likewise his impromptu odes in eleven languages, and his essay on the Basque dialects.

At the conclusion of this solemn and imposing exposition of genius, Mr. Sanderson, who had been roaring with laughter, I grieve to say, during the whole proceedings, took Jack away far a short trip to Paris.

A week later I received the following letter from my old friend, Professor Clarke, who had assisted at the examination:

"Dear Amos,—I congratulate you upon the great success of your infant prodigy! He is truly a wonderful creature! I did not wish to expose you to ridicule in public, otherwise I would have told you how cruelly you have been fooled. Your marvel-child, your 'second Mezzofanti,' etc., *is not a child.* Professor Ivan Paschkoff (alias Jack Sanderson) is the most distinguished linguist in Europe. You know his name well; he is a walking encyclopædia of general knowledge, besides being Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Moscow. He is a dwarf, a native of Odessa, and is at present in his forty-eighth year. A Russian student informs me that this is not the first time that Paschkoff has played this trick. While at your school he shaved twice a day, used powder and paint artistically and arranged his hair with all the skill of an experienced actor.—Yours sincerely,

J. Clarke.

"P.S.—Mr. Sanderson, Jack's alleged father, is the wealthy Lord Dennymore, the sporting earl. He is the greatest practical joker in England, and I presume rewarded Paschkoff munificently for his trouble."

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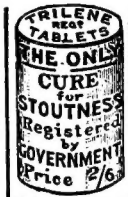

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LAST WRITTEN - - - - FIRST READ.

F. H. T.—The reason why ships are not struck by lightning is attributed to the general use which is now made of wire rope for rigging purposes, as well as to the fact that the hulls of ships are usually constructed of iron and steel. Thus the whole vessel forms an excellent and continuous conductor, by means of which the electricity is led away into the ocean before it has time to do any serious damage.

Q. S.—The chief warder in one of Her Majesty's prisons receives a salary of from £165 to £215 a year.

D. M. B.—Night blindness is a peculiar affection of the eye, in which the the patient sees very well during the day, but becomes blind as night approaches. It is mostly met with in warm climates, and usually gives way to mild treatment.

M. N. — So far as I am aware Canton is the only city in the world in which wheeled vehicles are never seen. The streets are so narrow and ill-paved that the only alternative to walking is to ride in a Sedan chair, or to employ the services of a donkey.

A. D.—Anyone who knows anything about zoology will tell you that monkeys have neither fleas nor any other parasites whatsoever. When monkeys begin to pick each other about in the friendly manner you have observed, they merely detach bits of hardened sebaceous matter which has been excreted by the glands.

Froggie.—It takes any given portion of the Gulf Stream two years to travel from Florida to the coast of Norway.

Tobia makes the following inquiry: "Is there any country where children are allowed to choose their own names?" ————Reading between the lines it occurs to us that "Tobias" is not exactly satisfied with the name his parents chose for him when a helpless infant. It may afford him some grain of satisfaction to know that there are two such countries. In New Zealand the Maori priest repeats to the infant a lengthy list of the names of its ancestors, fixing upon the one which the child by sneezing or crying when it is uttered, apparently prefers; while in Russia, the Cheremiss shakes the baby till it cries, and then repeats a string of names to it till it selects one for itself by ceasing its tears.

A. T.—Yes, it is true. At one time the Jews were a fair-haired race; now they are, with few exceptions, dark. Such is the case, in a lesser degree, with the Irish, among whom, 150 years ago, a dark-haired person was almost unknown.

F. C. M.—The greatest diving feat ever achieved was in moving the cargo of the ship, *Cape Horn*, wrecked off the coast of South America, when a diver named Hooper made seven descents to a depth of over 200 feet, remaining at one time forty-two minutes under the water.

A. B.—The remains of all the Tsars of Russia since Peter the Great lie in a memorial chapel built on one of the Islands of Neva. All the cenotaphs are exactly alike, each being a block of white marble without any decoration whatever. The only distinction by which each one is marked is the name of the deceased emperor.

Amateur.—The biggest billiard-room in the world is underneath Charing Cross Railway Station, London. It is a great haunt of Germans, Frenchmen, and others of our Continental visitors. There are thirty tables.

D. R. S.—Two wealthy Jews of Bagdad now own all remains of the ancient town of Babylon.

Simetha.—The eye of the vulture is so constructed that it is really a high-power telescope, enabling the bird to see objects at an almost incredible distance.

Queenie.—The proper way to brush the hair is not to brush it lengthwise, but to hold the ends of the hair, if it is long enough, and simply scrub the scalp with the brush. This process promotes the circulation of the blood and excites the pil-glands to action. After the hair has been thoroughly brushed in this way, it should be then finished with a few vigorous strokes lengthwise of the hair.

Wood.—The advantage is on the side of the iron ship. Mathematical calculations show that an iron ship will carry 116 tons to the 100 tons carried by a wooden ship of the same dimensions and loaded to the same draught of water.

Tramp.—The total strength of the United States Army, regular and volunteer, up to July 19th last was 227,000—44,000 being regulars and 183,000 volunteers.

Otto.—Sir Henry Irving made his first appearance on the stage on the 29th of September, forty-two years ago, as "Gaston" in *Richelieu*. His first appearance in London was made in 1866, in the St. James's Theatre. He has been manager of the Lyceum Theatre since 1878.

B. B. writes to say that: "It is a fact not generally known that if one holds his breath, wasps, bees, and hornets can be handled with impunity. The skin becomes sting-proof; but should the smallest quantity of air escape from the lungs, the sting will penetrate at once." B. B.'s explanation of this phenomenon is that holding the breath partially closes the pores of the skin.

Ostler.—Your kicking horse might possibly be cured by the following treatment. Tie one of his forelegs with a rope to the hind leg on the other side; then, as soon as he commences to kick, he jerks his front leg off the ground and goes down in a heap. I am told that two or three doses of this kind will cure the worst case possible.

H. E. L.—The Parliamentary exclamation "Hear, hear," was not always an expression of approval; and it was not always "Hear, hear." It was originally, "Hear him, hear him," and was used to call attention to a speaker's words. It is easy to see that this exclamation was occasionally derisive; it was described by one Member in 1770 as "disorderly."

J. N.—The Queen's will is engrossed on vellum, quarto size, and is bound as a volume and secured by a private lock.

N. B. has heard that seaweed is edible. He wants to know what sort of a food it makes. ————Although not the diet for an epicure, seaweed is, when dry, richer than oatmeal in nitrogenous constituents, and takes rank amongst the most nutritious of vegetable foods.

A. P. S.—Angle worms can be obtained anywhere by wetting the ground with a solution of blue vitriol or with soap suds, which will bring them out in surprising numbers.

R. B.—When two rainbows are seen at one time, the inner is brighter than the outer; moreover, the position of the bands of colour is reversed. This is because in the one the sun's rays are reflected once, whereas in the other they are reflected twice.

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£5 FOR CORRECT ANSWERS.

Most Unique Contest of the Age—£5 paid for Correct Lists made by Supplying Missing Letters in Places of Dashes—No Lottery—Popular Plan of Education—Read all the Particulars.

On the vote for public education, Sir John Gorst explained in the House of Commons that it was estimated the sum spent upon education in the course of the coming financial year would be £11,690,000. This sum was an earnest of the conviction of the people that education was a national necessity, and that the country depended for its greatness on an intelligent and instructed population, just as much as it did upon fleets and armies. All readers of this paper will, doubtless, endorse this view, and we, the publishers of "HOMELAND," now offer you an opportunity to display your knowledge and receive most generous payment for a little study. The object of this contest is to give an impetus to many dormant minds to awaken and think; also, we expect by this competition of brains to extend the circulation of "HOMELAND" to such a size that we shall be able to charge double the present rate for advertising in our columns. By this plan of increasing the number of subscriptions, and receiving more money from advertisers of soaps, pianos, medicines, books, baking powders, jewellery, etc., we shall add thousands of pounds a year to our income, and with this mathematical deduction before us, we have decided to operate this most remarkable "missing letters" contest.

HERE'S WHAT YOU ARE TO DO.

There are thirty words in this schedule, from each of which letters have been omitted, and their places have been supplied by dashes. To fill in the blank spaces and get the names properly, you must have some knowledge of geography and history. We want you to spell out as many words as you can, then send to us with a Postal Order for 1/6 to pay for a One Year's Subscription to "HOMELAND." For correct lists we shall give £5 in cash. Also, if your list contains twenty or more correct words, we shall send you a beautiful Egeria Diamond Scarf Pin (for lady or gentleman), the regular price of which is 2/6. Therefore, by sending your list you are positively certain of the 2/6 prize, and by being careful to send a complete list, you have an opportunity of the £5 cash award. The distance that you live from London makes no difference. All have equal opportunity for winning. Full particulars of the prize awards will be published in "HOMELAND."

PRIZES WILL BE SENT PROMPTLY.

Prizes will be honestly awarded and promptly sent. We publish the list of words to be studied out. In making your list of answers, be sure to give the number of each word:

1. **-RA-I-** A country of South America.
2. **-A-I-I-** Name of the largest ocean.
3. **M-D--E--A-E--** A sea.
4. **-M--O-** A large river in South America.
5. **T-A--S** Well-known English river.
6. **G-AS-OW** A great Scotch city.
7. **H------X** A Yorkshire town.
8. **N-A-A-A** Noted for display of water.
9. **PO-TL-ND** A place in England.
10. **-A-RI-** A city of Spain.
11. **H-V--A** A city on a well-known island.
12. **D-BL-N** An Irish city.
13. **G--R-L-A-** Greatest fortification in the world.
14. **S-A-LE-** A great explorer.
15. **C-L-F---I-** One of the United States.
16. **B-SM---K** A noted ruler.
17. **--CTO-I-** Another noted ruler.
18. **P-R-U-A-** A country of Europe.
19. **A-ST-A-I-** A big island. [American.
20. **M--IN-E-** Name of the most prominent
21. **P-R-SM--TH** A famous English seaport.
22. **Y--KS--RE** An English county.
23. **B--G-T-N** A south-coast holiday resort.
24. **T-NN--ON** A noted poet.
25. **W-ST-IN-T-R** A famous abbey.
26. **J-RS-Y** An island in the English Channel.
27. **H-M-L-N-** A popular family magazine.
28. **B-H-I-G** A sea.
29. **A-L-N-I-** An ocean.
30. **M-D-G-S-A-** An island near Africa.

In sending your list of words, mention whether you want prize money sent by cheque, money order, or registered post; we will send any way that winners require. The Egeria Diamond is a perfect imitation of a Real Diamond. We defy experts to distinguish it from real except by microscopic test. In every respect it serves the purpose of Genuine Diamond of purest quality. It is artistically mounted in a fine gold-cased pin, warranted to wear for years. This piece of jewellery will make a most desirable gift to a friend if you do not need it yourself. At present our supply of these gifts is limited, and if they are all gone when your set of answers comes in, we shall send you 2/6 in money instead of the Scarf or Shawl Pin, so you shall either receive the piece of jewellery or the equivalent in cash, in addition to your chance of winning £5 cash prize. This entire offer is an honest one, made by a responsible publishing house. Now study, and exchange light brainwork for cash. With your list of answers send postal order for 1/6 to pay for twelve months' subscription to our family magazine, "HOMELAND," which is only sold by subscription; also send a stamp for immediate reply. If you have already subscribed, mention that fact in your letter, and we will extend your subscription from the time the present one expires.

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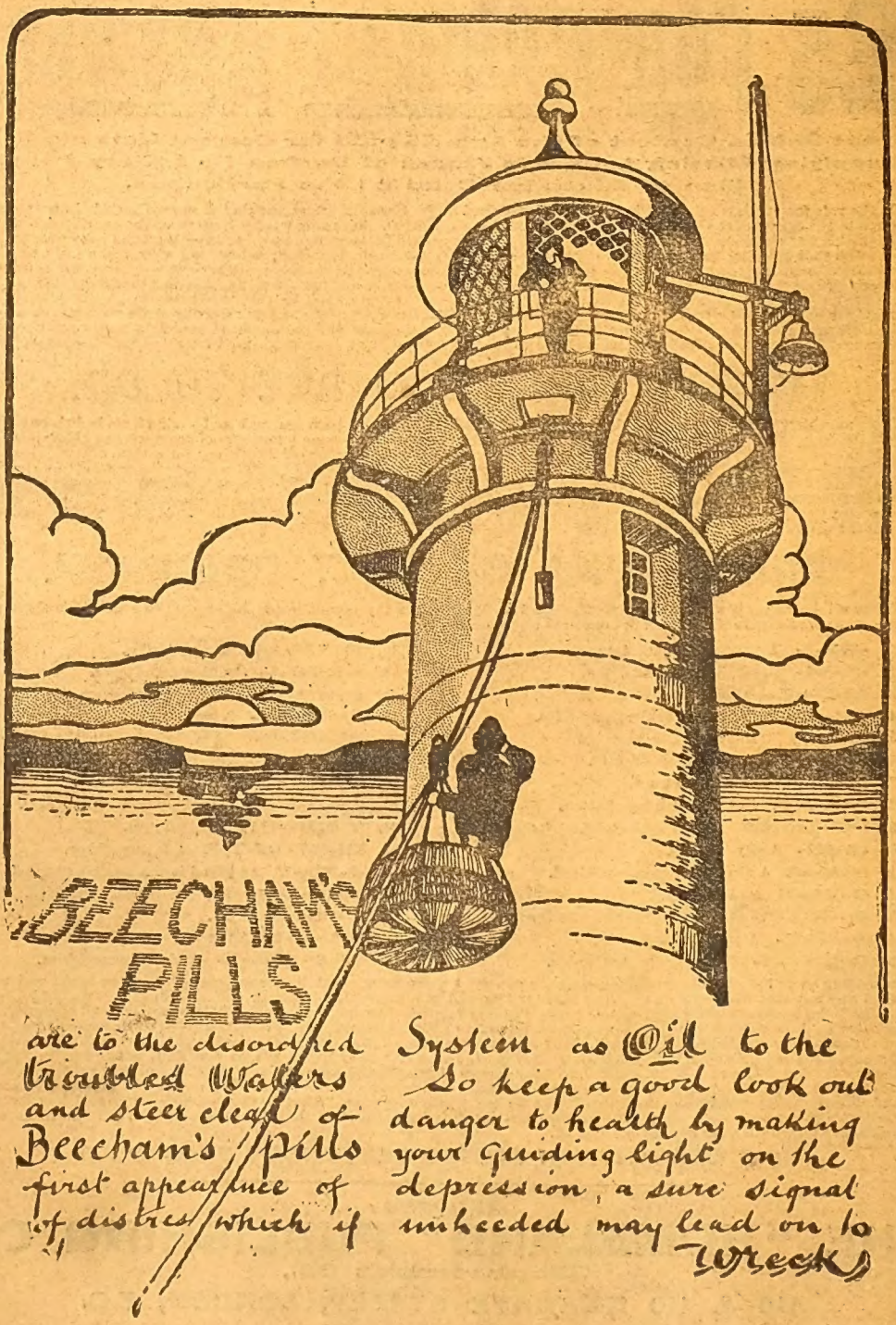

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